

ALCON MALANZORE.

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A MOORISH TALE.

BY THE HONORABLE

M.^{rs} ESME STEUART ERSKINE.

—A simple Poet's wandering dream,
Who loves to rove where Fancy's golden beam
Illumes the flowery, fair, fantastic way,
That bows submissive to her frolic sway—
Where shadowy forms obey her mystic wand,
And weep or smile beneath her despot hand—

BRUSSELS .

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TO ·
HER ROYAL HIGHNESS,
THE DUCHESS OF YORK,
THIS POEM IS INSCRIBED;
AS THE SINCERE,
THOUGH HUMBLE TRIBUTE
OF RESPECT AND ADMIRATION.

What silver voices floating round
Break through my slumber's ærial bound?—
Immortal odours fill the breeze,
That gently waves the light-robed trees—
The bosom of the lake is still,
Save at my foot, a dimpling rill
Sparkles and dances in a ray,
That beams not like the beam of day—
The silent scene so fair and lone,
Is awed by power, it scarce may own—
Some Spirit bends above the spring,
And smiling shakes his balmy wing.—
—And hush!—amid effulgent rays,
What bright-haired Seraph meets my gaze?—
His brow of never-fading youth,
Serene in purity and truth,
Where Beauty all her charm has thrown,
Is circled by a laurelled crown;—

His plumes enriched by thousand hues,
Yet sparkle with celestial dew;—
The starry zone, the robe of white,
With dazzling radiance mock the sight;—
And o'er his graceful shoulders slung,
The golden lyre of heaven is hung.—

« Unearthly Visitant!—all hail!
Thou who to mortal eyes unveil
Essence divine!—oh! deign to stay!
Thy will unquestionable, say!—
E'en now through every vein I feel
A glow unknown, unwonted, steal—
By it, and by thy golden lyre,
And by thine eye's immortal fire,
And by thy presence grand and high,
I hail thee—Power of Minstrelsy! »—

He smiled—and Nature owned the smile—
Harmonious sounds the air beguile—

And new-born flow'rets raise their head,
And bloom wher'e'er his footsteps tread.—
He gave his lyre—and bade me try
The awful music of the sky :—
My hand reluctantly I threw,
And nought save sounds of discord drew ;—
But, as I swept it, every strain
Seemed mellowed, as it rose again ;—
' And visions of poetic birth,
Enwrapt me from this nether earth.—
It seemed as ages backward rolled,
And in far climes the tale I told,
Of scenes beheld with that fair Guide,
' As through the buxom air we ride.—
Iberia draws my wandering eyes—
Her crimsoned plains before me rise !—
A deed of darkness waits us there—
—Heard'st thou not howlings i'the air ?—
For things unknown to Heaven, can glide
With the grim Moor, from Afric's side—'

And foul Enchanters spread their spell,
And speed their work so dark and well,
That scarce a Spirit pure we meet,
Who might our entrance hither, greet.—
To yon fair convent hie away,
We'll rest us there 'till dawn of day :
Viewless we point our airy flight,
And o'er the lofty bounds alight :—
—Some fatal web is weaving here—
T'will make my song—a song of fear.—



ALCON MALANZORE

CANTO FIRST.

« GENIUS of Spain !—to thine, empyreal throne ,
Where raised among the Guardian Spirits high ,
Thou sitst supreme !—to thee, the prayer , the groan ,
That speak a prostrate Nation's misery !
Oh !—intercede with Him, that far above ,
Thyself and all thy Peers , for e'er doth dwell ,
Enwrapt in light eternal, joy and love ,
And potency whose measure none can tell !—
Oh ! plead for us '—through the immortal Son ,
Plead for a race condemned, and by his wrath undone !—

« And raise thy mighty shield!—and crush the Foe ,
Whose impious Gods pollute our christian land!—
Speak!—and the stream of life will cease to flow ,
And Infidels will own thy sovereign hand.—
The Crescent gleams above the hallowed Fane ,
And smeared with blood, the Cross is trampled down ,
And save the scattered fragments of the slain ,
The very trace of Man from hence is gone :—
Canst thou behold—nor bid such sorrows end'—
Oh! stretch thy venging arm!—Genius of Spain, descend! — 20

The Abbess paused—yet still her speaking eye ,
In all the fire of holy energy ,
Gazed on that heaven , beyond whose azure glow ,
She prayed the mercy, vainly sought below.—
Yet marked she at her side, a Novice fair ,
In anguish whisper.—« Mercy dwells not there !—»
Marked she , the doubtful glance, that mocked her gaze ,
The forced and bitter smile , that coldly plays

Around a lip, where rising sorrow threw
Its long-suppressed, its worst, its darkest hue.—
On that maternal neck, with head reclined,
Her unbound tresses floating to the wind—
Her cheek with conscious blushes deeply dyed,
Which from that piercing view, she fain would hide :
• Oh! may some pitying Seraph list—and bear,
E'en to the eternal throne, thy faultless prayer!—
• May Peace to Man descend!—and hush this jar,
Of heaven abhorred—this self-invented war!—
Yet—may the Demon of revenge be stayed
By the same hand, that yields immortal aid!— 40
Enough of this—for see, mild Evening shades,
With dewy wing, our convent's darkling glades.—
Her's is an hour of rest and solitude :
Oh! happy they, on whom no thoughts intrude,
Save such as wearied Nature round her throws,
When softly sinking to her veiled repose!—
Impartial Parent!—in whose smile all dwell,
Alike the Christian and the Infidel :

Say, why should things, of heaven rejected, share
Thine equal love, it never taught to spare?—
Yon lingering sun, that sets in floods of gold,
Persia's soft tribes with prostrate awe behold—
It cheers our bolder Warriors with its gleam,
And the dark Moor hails each returning beam.—
E'en now perchance some fierce Invader's gaze
Is fixed like ours, and marks its setting blaze. —
She rests upon that thought—yet more intent,
On the far-sinking orb, her looks are bent.—

And ne'er did Eve, upon a scene more calm,
More lovely, weep her gemmed and fragrant balm— 6:
The sloping vallies rich in autumn shone,
That lightly tipped their murmuring leaves with brown;
And glittering oft beneath some tangled maze;
Or opening boldly, Guadalquiver strays.—
Round, Andalusia's mountains proudly rear
Their hoary heads in majesty severe;
And with dark, stormy front, and threatening brow,
Frown o'er the lovely vales that stretch below:

While emulative of their gloomy pride,
Midway upon a lesser mountain's side,
The convent's lofty spires, in glittering play,
Return the mellow beam of parting day.
Within those dreary walls, that close-barred gate,
Unwilling victims of relentless Fate,
Young Beauty blooms—but ever blooms alone,
And Virtue droops, uncherished, and unknown.

Yet stood the Abbess of Saint-Mary's high
In all we love, revere, and sanctify;
Time on her brow had left its honored trace,
Yet had not robbed it of that matchless grace 80
Virtue alone bestows—a sacred beam
That passes not, with Beauty's dazzling dream;
Her days so tranquil, save for other's woe,
Ought seldom bade the ready tear to flow;
Tho' not from bigot superstition free,
Meek, mild, e'en cheerful was her piety;
Her trust fulfilled with fond, maternal care,
For her the grateful Nuns oft poured their prayer;

For her, who spurning the base pride of power,
Employ'd it, but to strew with many a flower,
Their lonely path, and cheer the pensive hour.
Unlike thine other prisons, Spain, were here
No shrieking penitent, no pain-wrung tear,
No secret cell, where trembling suppliants stood,
Where sickening Earth gorged on her children's blood.
Blush Christianity! oh! blush from shame,
That e'er beneath thy pure, and hallowed name,
Such guilty sacrifice, such impious deed,
Has stained thy bosom, bade thine altars bleed!—
And blush too, Spain! infatuated land! 109
That the foul Demon, 'neath thy fostering hand,
Enlarged his hideous form, to utmost size,
Rearing his forehead to the darkened skies,
And shadowing o'er thee, grimly smiled to see
The expiring victims of Credulity!
Oh! not the Giant's cradle, haughty Rome,
Could match thy dark, inquisitorial tomb!

Yet haply would a gleam of transient light,
Dart through thy bigotry's deep-clouded night :
Thus in Saint-Mary's, 'spite each priestly wile,
Content had beamed her fair, and placid smile ;
It was not the abode of Happiness,
And yet it scarcely might appear as less,
Save when the eye prophetic could behold
The heart, that beat beneath its sable fold ;
And follow to her cell the sacred Maid,
And mark the glow of simple pleasure fade,
The saddened sigh, the slowly falling tear,
That heedless sprung, tho' checked in painful fear ;
Yet far below the grief that others bear, 120
For 'seldom did remorse envenom there.
And who had seen this eve the cloistered Maids.
In smiling groupes, range 'mong the flowery shades,
Or heard their voice's soft, melodious strain,
Or marked them lightly bounding o'er the plain,
With dark locks waving, or with loosened veil,
With cheek rich glowing from the evening gale,

And laughing eye—had sworn this calm retreat
Was dedicate to Joy—his favorite seat.

Pausing—awhile the youthful Rosaline,
With pensive silence eyed the varying scene,
Yet marks she nought—around it vainly throws
Its magic beauty and its still repose.—
From setting sun she turns her restless gaze,
O'er wood, o'er hill, o'er silvery wave it strays;
Then on the sister-throng, her vacant eye
Is bent so long, so wild, so mournfully,
It marks the workings of a mind, where Pain
Has fixed a sting, or Guilt a lasting stain.—
And can it be!—can ought of falsehood dare 140
To veil itself, neath form so soft and fair?
So soft, it seems not of this mortal earth—
So fair, the loveliest of celestial birth.—
Can ought be read of dark impurity,
In the raised glance of that bright-weeping eye?
Shading its deep-blue lustre 'neath the fringe,

That rests upon her cheek's luxuriant tinge—
Upon that calm majestic brow, no trace
Is branded by thy well-known touch, Disgrace!
And if around that lip of rosy hue,
Young laughing Love, his wily ambush threw,
That lip, unconscious of the guileless stain,
Boasts nought of the voluptuous, or the vain;
If in the softness of her air was seen
A fondness, playful, arch, and infantine—
Yet calmly dignified, and chastely cold,
It hecked the free, and awed the loosely bold.—

Oh! if that voice, that lip, that eye betray,
Virtue, thou art a shade!—base thought, away!—
Angels are Syrens.—Evil reigns alone, 16a
If in that breast it has usurped a throne!—
All there is gentle as an Infant's sleep,
Pure as the pearls, that morning roses weep,
Tender as Poets feign Cytherea's sigh,
With all their Dian's virgin majesty.—

She had a lofty energy of mind,
With form of Sylph, by Grace itself refined—
You would have thought this Being to mortals given,
Too delicate to meet the airs of heaven.—
Had Nature then, with disobedient force,
For once broke through, her fixed unvarying course,
Bidding Perfection rise upon this earth,
Debarred its native skies, its heavenly birth—
No—'twas not bounteous Nature, that alone
Could claim this lovely, favored Child her own—
From Piety the streams of virtue came,
At once their origin, support, and aim;
But warm, enthusiastic, still retained
The shade of darkness, that around it reigned.—
Yet ah! humanity is weak and frail, 180
Breaking with the storm, and bending to the gale—
Tho' strongly propt by law's controlling aid,
Tho' sheltered by religion's sacred shade!
Nor royal birth—nor pure unspotted fame—
Nor Virtue's self, could that young breast reclaim
From rooted grief—and must I say—from shame.—

Still had the Abbess watched her as she stood,
And marked her varying, melancholy mood.

“ Daughter, think not thy bosom’s secret grief,
That shuns the light and proudly scorns relief;
The silent tear, worn cheek, and struggling sigh,
Have passed unheeded or unpitied by.

Long have I watched with all a Mother’s care,
Thy blooming sweetness wasting to the air,
And long have sorrowed, that the Child I love,
Of every worldly thing far, far above,
Bending to earth, with painful step, and slow,
Should seek in death alone, the end of woe;
Or next to death, should hide a virtue rare,
Unequalled talent, beauty matchless fair,

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Within the convent’s solitary gloom,
Its secret paths, its deep, tho’ living tomb :
Nay, start not Rosaline !—if bent with age,
If tossed by Passion’s foul, demoniac rage,

Stung with remorse, or by misfortune prest,
Then mightst thou seek the Church's hallowed breast,
And there—and only there—find guard, and rest.
But thou O Daughter! in whose royal vein
Mingles the blood of England, and of Spain;
In youth's first opening bloom—but whose high name
E'en now is stamped with seal of virtuous fame,
Enriched with future promise—whence dost thou,
With all these honors wreathing on thy brow,
Desert the post by Providence assigned,
For which it formed those energies of mind,
Those very virtues—that transplanted here,
But lose their fragrance, droop, and disappear.
And think my Child, that even thy fair fame,
This sudden step may taint with spot, and shame—
I see thy blushes mantle at the thought, 220
I see thy glance, with indignation fraught,
Yet—if this arm ere propt thine infant head,
If ere I watched around thine orphan bed,
Or planted in thy childhood seeds of truth,
Or helped to clear the dangerous path of youth—

Oh! Princess! list to me!—tis all I ask,
This once—and I have done the eventful task.

« While shining in your sovereign Uncle's court,
Its brightest gem, its pride, its chief support,
While noblest suitors bowed around, and still,
(Waving compliance with your Brother's will),
You treated all, with gentlest courtesy,
Distinguished none, and yet were boasted free;
While high in sanguine youth's light-hearted mood,
Admired, beloved, you yet had firmly stood,
Praised, and respected by the wise and good—
Wondrous to tell—from that exalted height,
(Perhaps too soaring for this mortal state,)
You sunk at once—and struck by inward care,
Became the victim of concealed despair! 240
In vain its hidden source do all explore,
The effect alone they view—for soon no more
In that wan cheek, that downcast, pensive mien,
Could ought be traced of joy, of Rosaline.

Pale Envy smiled, and Slander's venom'd tongue
Like lightning round, its baneful murmurs flung;
At length 'twas known, that soon a convent's shade
Would close upon that young, and royal Maid,
Who had appeared but as a beam of light,
A moment glittered to their dazzled sight,
Then set for ever, in the shades of night.
Deaf to entreaty, cold to prayers, and tears,
You knew no pity, and you felt no fears;
Reason was vain—unyielding to the last,
From Fortune's highest pinnacle you past,
You past to solitude, to poverty,
To self-condemned, and lasting misery.

« Oh! yet my Child—while yet thou mayst—reflect!
To weigh the deed, each power of thought, collect—
When done—tis past recall—alas! not then 260
Canst thou arise to hope, to life again.
How wilt thou answer for these years mispent,
Hiding the gifts that Providence has lent,

Spurning the station it designed for thee,
Baffling the work of partial Destiny?
Thine are the duties of the active scene,
No selfish woe with them must intervene:
To awe the proud oppressor, cheer the opprest,
To shed around thee, happiness, and rest;
To strengthen by example, virtue's cause,
Thy sex's dignity, religion's laws—
These are thy duties, these fulfilled alone
Can best soothe sorrow, or for guilt atone,
Save *that* against our Church—at whose dread fane,
A life devoted only can attain
Pardon and peace for the abandoned soul,
That doubts her faith, or spurns her high control. »

« Enough—that seals my doom—yes Abbess know,
The fatal cause from whence my sorrows flow,
Bears such impiety, that but to hear
Would chill thy love to hatred, and to fear.—

—O Parent! Friend! most honored, most revered! 280
Guide of my youth, whose gentle bosom reared,
Whose fostering hand sustained me! canst thou learn,
Of shame, of crime, and yet forbear to spurn
The kneeling culprit from thee?—canst thou bow
The majesty of virtue down so low,
As yet to look on me, to pray for me,
To think of what I was, and what must be?
To pour thy blessing on this humbled head,
Ere the last sigh of fleeting life has sped,
Ere that dread secret, in the silent earth,
Sleeps with the guilty breast, that gave it birth?
—Oh! thou dost weep!—most welcome, precious tear!
Than e'en thy tenderest smile, more fond, more dear!
It speaks that love maternal, true, sublime,
Unworn by years, unshaken e'en by crime.
—Withdraw it not!—it is the sole last tie,
That binds me to a life of misery;
The only hope that lingers round my heart 300
The only solace that will not depart.
—And yet—I dare not tell thee—here unknown

Must rest that fatal mystery—save to one—
The crime involves my life—my blood alone
Could to our stern, unbending laws atone.—
Nay, start not—for however deep that blot,
Religion, principle, forsook me not—
Blindfold I followed to destruction's brink,
Yet tore the bandage, and refused to sink.—
But in this bosom, that thou sayst so fair,
Oh! it has fixed contamination there—
Yet, by the cloister's sacred veil enshrined,
My days to penitence and prayer resigned;
My heart subdued—affection, hope, and fear,
For ever chilled by vigilance austere;
Weaned from the pains of earth—I may once more,
With thought immaculate that Power adore,
Whose kind, parental hand, shall give release,
Receive the atonement, bid each sorrow cease,
And raised from dust, with every sin forgiven, 320
Crown me a dedicated Bride of Heaven! »—

Then sinking on her knees, with hands upraised,
In seeming extacy a moment gazed :
And by her side, the reverend Abbess knelt,
Shared her devotion, all her sufferings felt.—
Solemn and slow the silver accents rose,
Hope tinged her cheek—her virgin bosom glows
With joy ineffable—as angels feel,
When heavens respond their halleluian peal.
Oh! boasted world, say, what hast thou to give,
When feelings such as these, have ceased to live?
Thy paltry pleasures yet more paltry seem,
We smile at pain, and woe becomes a dream :
Scorning thy slaves, from thee they never know
The only perfect joy thou canst bestow.
It is a spark of that celestial fire,
Which dares to its great origin aspire,
Bursting the prison of our living clay,
It seeks its source in heaven's immortal day ;
Or 'tis a breath of that celestial love,
Wafted by Mercy's Messengers above;—

Calm, blissful, pure, the mystic current flows,
And round its charge, a shield empyreal throws.—

Rolling its echoes from the mountain side,
The convent toll in distant murmurs died;
The scattered hamlets greet the holy sound;
The Peasant calls his blooming offspring round,
And blesses them, as lisping slow they share
Returning even's regulated prayer;
And draw down curses on the turbaned head,
And call each Saint to guard their infant bed.
Despair, remorse, slept in that Mourner's breast,
As to the Abbess's wan cheek she prest
Her coral lip—no word was said, and nought
Conveyed to each the comprehended thought,
Except that filial kiss—when moving on,
Obedient to the hoarse bell's warning tone,
They reach the cloistered aisles, assembling where
The consecrated Sisters meet for prayer.

And well methinks the melancholy scene, 360
Might from this earth, the awed beholder wean :
The light of day shut out, the torch's flare
Supplies it with imperfect, partial glare ;
Along the deep arcades where lie the dead,
'The white-veiled Novices in silence tread ;
'Their snowy forms emerging through the gloom,
Appear as yielded by some yawning tomb :
And see, behind you lofty pillared shades,
Gently advancing the dark-mantled Maids ;
With folded hands, and eye that seeks the ground,
And measured step, they slowly gather round.
One aged Monk beside the altar sate,
And Abbess canopied in chair of state ;
And soon the Sisters ranged on either hand,
In triple rows with breviaries stand.

'Trembling in soft low note, the solemn sound
Of sacred music murmurs gently round ;
Then bursts into the anthem loud and high,
'Then variates in wandering melody ;

Their voices, hearts, at once the Sisters raise 380
In full according symphony of praise.
And Rosaline, as it sweetly swelled along,
Joined in each note devotion's lovely song;
Warm, pure, and perfect, from her lips it flowed,
And grateful hope in every feature glowed:
O Maiden! seize this moment 'ere tis past,
Of joy, of innocence, it is thy last!—
« My sin is pardoned! »—even as she spoke,
A painful image on her fancy broke,*
And with it came that strange foreboding fear,
Which on this very eve, had forced a tear,
'That bitter tear, that deep, and struggling sigh,
Which drew the Abbess's observing eye.
In deep anxiety her gaze she sought,
And marked her brow of melancholy thought;
The Abbess met her look: each seemed possessed
With dread that neither to herself confest;
Each turned her to her prayers, yet strove in vain
Devotion's faded fervor to regain.

The last sad echo died upon the ear, 400
That wrapt in extacy, still bent to hear
Its soft prolonging note — hushed, silent all,
Prostrate the hallowed Sisters slowly fall,
In act of humble adoration round,
Bending their veiled foreheads to the ground—
When loud, tho' distant, rang the portal bell,
Some Stranger,† or some Monk's approach to tell;
And yet, so rare its tone, with one consent,
In fixed attention, Nuns and Abbess leant;
Near, and more near the jarring sounds arose,
Of creaking hinges, and the bar's hoarse close;
A hasty footstep filled the Maids with dread:
« Tis not » — they whispered — « the lay-Sister's tread! » —
When rushing in — pale—breathless—stained with blood—
A white-haired, venerable Father stood!
One hand sustained the Cross, the other prest
In anguish, struck upon his aged breast:
« Fly! » — he exclaimed — « away ye Maids of heaven! —
Fly, ere these holds by stronger hand be riven,

And vomit forth hell's armed, and outcast crew, 420
Breathing violation—murder—e'en to you !—
All, all is lost—(God 's will be done!) and here
The vengeful Victor speeds his dark career;
Pours from the mountain o'er this peaceful vale,
Which soon must echo to the Matron's wail,
The Virgin's shame — the slaughtered Infant's cry—
They press my footsteps—Maids of heaven, fly! —

As when o'er timorous birds that seek the shade,
Or flutter sportive round the sunny glade,
Wild as the breeze in which their pinions play,
They freely pour their simple roundelay:
A hungry vulture from his nest of air,
Views with a greedy eye, the destined fare;
Hushed is the grove—as hovering dark, and near,
He thrills his victims with instinctive fear;
And when he sinks, the rushing myriads fly,
With beating wing disperse—escape—or die :—

Thus with those lonely Nuns—in wild amaze,
They list the fatal tale the Monk conveys ;
Loud shrieks of horror mix with mute despair, 440
Reproach of Heaven's high will, with fervent prayer ;
Now round the Cross their helpless arms they fling ,
Now to the venerable Abbess cling ;
Who, with uplifted eyes, and folded hands :
In speechless sorrow, one dark moment stands :
Tis past—the gathering ills, that round her close,
But yield more might, and firmness to oppose ;
That long respected voice has power to still
Terror's wild groan, Despair's yet wilder will ;
Her accent, and her look , composed, serene ,
Calm the sad tumult of the maddening scene ;
And as she raises up her hands in prayer,
Her holy confidence all seem to share ,
And new-born hope, and resolution high ,
Spring to each breast, and light in every eye :
* And ye my Children, trust for your defence ,
Your God—your Saint—your spotless innocence!—

Brave death, imprisonment and torture—all,
That can on suffering, struggling nature fall,
To guard that innocence from spot and blame, 460
Yourselves from infamy, and woe, and shame! » —
In haste the Father took the word, and said :
« I do conjure ye—by the pains ye dread—
By this blest Cross—by Him whose blood was shed
For you, and all—by every joy ye prize—
To yield your lives a guiltless sacrifice !
The curse of Heaven will rest on her, who sinks,
And from this high, this awful duty shrinks
In deed, in word, in thought—her name I read
As traitress to her country, and her God !—
Speed to the deepest cells!—the tombs—the dead
Will hide ye in their still, and marble bed ! » —
Scarce had he ended, when a distant sound,
In echoes rude, reverberated round,
And warned the trembling Sisters ere too late,
How near they stood to all we dread and hate,

Now from that cloister all save two, are sped;
Perchance to seek the dwellings of the dead,

Or in some hidden nook, or secret cave,
Cherish a last, and lingering hope to save— 480
All fled but two—the Abbess yet was here,
And to her side, in mute amaze and fear,
The kneeling Princess clung—all was so still,
So calm, so drear—it struck a heavier chill
Than the wild scene confusion erst had wrought,
To sure yet unknown horrors it had brought
Reflection close—upon that bending head,
The Abbess' trembling, suppliant hands were spread,
With eyes uplifted, she appeared to claim
A blessing on the brow, condemned to shame.—
It seems as tho' a word might separate
The viewless link that yet suspends their fate;
They speak not—breathe not—but her waving hand
Conveys the dreaded and the last command--
To fly—to leave her—for the Russian's rage,
May spare perchance the sacred head of Age;
But maiden beauty hath a traiterous bloom,
That drags or lures its Victim to her tomb.

One moment round the Abbess' neck she hung,
The next, like lightning, from her sight she sprung: 500
'That maddening thought—it winged her utmost speed—
Soon corridor, and lengthening aisles recede,
And as she flies, rude voices from behind,
Swell, with loud shout, and horrid laugh, the wind:
„ Oh! I will save thee yet! „—she wildly cried—
And paused—and turned—and would have death defied
But for that other thought—onward she flew,
And gained an outlet, close concealed from view;
Her way she forced athwart the foliage green,
That hid it with its dark, and mazy screen—
The rising moon displayed her silver crest,—
T'was bright as day—and all looked peace and rest.—
Attentively she bowed her listening ear,
Dead silence reigned—no mortal lingered near—
Oh! might she reach yon chapel's sacred shade,
In which enclosed, a secret tomb is laid!—
Through the dark grove she glides with cautious tread—
The chapel's reached—her heart now sinks with dread,—

Now flutters high with hope—her trembling hands
Seize upon the bar—ah heaven! it withstands 520
Her utmost force!—and see—the mountain-side
Groans 'neath the weight of military pride!—
Tis silence now no more—the horn's harsh sound,
Mingled with shouts and cries, re-echoes round—
Despair and agony each soft nerve strain—
It moves—it yields—alas! it yields in vain!
Who clasps her waist?—what ruthless monster dare
Stain by his touch, a form so chaste and fair?
And from that brow its snowy bandage tear?—
And gathering round, see—what grim faces rise,
While two armed plunderers struggle for the prize!
—Pale Cynthia sickens—and the torch's rays,
Round the dark figures flash, with waving blaze.—

Fear gave her strength—indignant shame and pride,
The place of courage, and defence supplied;
Through the stern combatants, who fierce and bold,
Retained her as they fought, with iron hold,

She broke at once—regardless of the life,
That all but yielded to the unsheathed knife,
And raised her veil—when e'en those Ruffians stood, 540
For one short while, admiring and subdued—
It seemed a Being of air, celestial bright,
Scaring the gloomy spirits of the night.—
E'en those, on whom the equal hand of Time
Has left a trace indelible of crime;
Their nature evil, hardened to its shame,
The eye of Virtue—only that—may tame—
Callous to suffering—paying scorn with scorn,
And every ill in sullen patience borne,
They fear not—shrink not—save beneath that look,
Whose power, tho' momentary, few can brook:
Tis felt—'tis past—and like the passing wind,
Leaves not one solitary trace behind.—
« Warriors!—I am your prisoner—from your hand,
My honor, safety, I beseech—demand!—
Nay—on your lives all injury restrain—
I am a Daughter of the Kings of Spain—

« Hence!—from, thy base and abject fears arise!—
Vile crouching slave!—but—by yon starry skies,
And by our Sovereign's sacred soul I swear, 600
That he among you, who again shall dare
To offer shame to Matron or to Maid—
His life is forfeit to the Headsman's blade—
And every drop of female blood that's spilt,
Shall be avenged—e'en to the sabre-hilt!—
Yet once—thou'rt spared—mercy is shown to thee—
Learn to bestow, what now thou prayst from me! »—
He spoke—the obedient Soldiers trembling hear,
And bending low, at once they disappear.—

Ill-fated Maid! t'was then some Demon stood,
And wrought thy doom in characters of blood!
While sternly joyed hell's black malignant train,
To see a pardoned Angel sink again—
Irrevocable fall! the Fiend has won,
'The web is woven, and the work is done' »—

Yet at his feet the shrouded Novice lay ,
Still as the tomb o'er which her wild locks play ;
The moonish Chief gazed on the prostrate Fair,
Marked her fine form, her richly flowing hair,
The rounded um, that o'er her head was thrown, 620
All, all, the touch of finished beauty own —
A while he paused—and deeply sighed—yet nought
Stained by a wish impure his inmost thought ;
Cold he admired—and in good truth 'twas rare
To see relax that deep-marked brow of care,
To see that eye, with other lightnings flame,
Than those which glory, and fierce war might claim —
And yet he sighed—perchance in that stern mind
Some distant recollection half defined,
Stayed for a moment the dear-bought delight,
The blood-stained triumph of victorious fight.
He knelt, and gently his dark hand withdrew
Each clustered tress, disclosing to the view
Such polished neck, as to the Trojan's sight
Revealed his goddess-Mother—rosate bright —

The Hero trembled—and his swarthy cheek
Flushed with emotion that no words can speak—
He feared—he doubted—yet forbore to raise
The veil, that hid her from his ardent gaze—
Impetuous, high, and spurning all control, 640
He curbed for once the feelings of his soul.—
Her bosom rose, and with a sigh so deep,
It bade anxiety a moment sleep :—
« Thy fears are vain—thou’rt safe and free! »—he said—
The unconscious fair one, slowly raised her head—
Is it a dream?—that voice each nerve it thrilled—
Roused every sense, while every fear it stilled—
She rose—she turned—bewildered and amazed—
Lifted her veil—and for one instant gazed—
The next—her chaste yet unresisting charms
Were folded in the Moor’s enraptured arms !—
That moment!—oh! ’twas more than earthly bliss !—
Pure yet extatic was the trembling kiss,
That bending his gigantic form he prest
On Rosalina’s cheek—his mailed breast

Heaved with delight—and in the Warriors's eye,
Was seen a tear!—a tear of ecstasy.—
The world was lost to them—and all its care,
Its threatened horrors melted to the air.

Kind Providence!—how tender hast thou strewed
Soft flowrets o'er each path however rude,—
However wild and rocky to the eye,
A thousand hidden buds of richest dye,
More glowing from the contrast, blooming lone,
Smooth the hard toil, and charm the Wanderer on,
And e'en when past, their perfume still can cheer
The desert waste, tho' hopeless, cold, and drear.—
To Rosaline their rich and clustering wreath
Veiled the dark precipice that yawned beneath;
Warm with the brightest hues of love they smiled,
Her eye was pleased, her heedless step beguiled—
Harsh Care was flown, and Danger frowned no more,
When shielded by the arm of Alcon Malanzore.—

ALCON MALANZORE.

CANTO SECOND.

Has life no real charm—no solid joy?

Are all its pleasures false, and glittering show?

We seek for gold—and must a worthless toy

Deceive for ever by its tawdry glow?

Author of Nature! who hast formed so fair

This teeming globe, and decked with hand profuse,

Her variegated surface—blooming where,

Beauty unfolds with never-ending hues,

And dread Sublimity uplifts the soul,

Where Alpine snows arise, and boundless oceans roll.

Shall these, and all thy kindly bounteous hand

Has showered on favored Man, be counted nought?

All that thy power has done—thy goodness planned,

Be scarcely worth one poor, one grateful thought?

Shall Nature's volume no resources yield,

Her chaste endearments no delight inspire,

The weary mind, from apathy to shield,

Or fail to thrill with pure devotion's fire?

Victim of Sorrow!—seek her lone abode—

And quit the thankless throng, for Nature, and her God!—20

The moon had risen—and the dark-blue sky

Stretched round its rich be-spangled canopy;

It gleamed o'er Andalusia's fertile vale,

Her gloomy mountain, and sequestered dale;

And save the wandering stream, that bubbling flowed,

Nought broke the silence of the calm abode.—

'Twas soft, and lovely—yet the restless eye

Reluctant gazed on still inanity;

Nought could it find to animate the scene ,
No flocks or herds grazed on the tender green—
No woodbine-clustered cottage streamed its light ,
No pensive Maiden sought the hour of night ,
To gaze on Cynthia's brow—or mourning bend
O'er the white tomb of some long-cherished Friend.—
It seemed no mortal footstep e'er had prest
The fairy landscape's solitary rest.—
Askst thou the cause '—behind yon craggy steep,
The Sentinels of war, their night-watch keep—
Tents clothe the verdant sides—the wooded glen
Moans o'er the rough-hewn beds of warrior-Men. 40

Unmoved and cold , the Soldier glanced his eye ,
As pacing round the turret bleak and high ,
He viewed the dancing moon-beam lightly tinge ,
With silvery touch' the mountain's shadowy fringe ;
And glisten on the tents, that round him wreath ,
Stretching their crowded ranks to vales beneath ;
Behind him , awful , snow-clad peaks arise ,
And hoarsely roaring Guadalquiver lies ;

Broadly, and deep its dark waves intervene,
Forcing the dizzy precipice between ;
The ruined battlement, on which he stood,
Bore the dread marks of War's avenging flood ;
The broken arch, the gaping breach, still proved ,
That hither had his blood-stained footsteps roved.
In that lone tower, a royal Captive's staid—
—Saint Mary's fair noviciated Maid ;
And in yon darksome cell the Chieftain throws
His ironed limbs to vainly wooed repose.

But on the moorish Sentry's hardened breast,
Vainly the fine-wrought scene its power imprest ;
He gazed upon the tented steep , and cursed
The chance , that thwarted his unbounded thirst
For war's dark rapine—not the starred sky,
Nor proud Sierra's wild sublimity—
Nor the stern silence, that pervaded round ,
Tho' thousands couched upon the burthened ground—
Could for one instant, raise degraded thought ,
Or soothe a mind, with each base passion fraught.—

Oh ! tis not such thy sacred charms can taste,
Exalted Nature ! Matron veiled and chaste !
Whose low Possessor, reckless of thy worth,
Leaves heavenly joy, for vulgar sensual mirth !
The great, the virtuous, the refined alone,
Can feel thy rapture, or thine influence own.

Hasanor, starting from his gloomy trance,
Observed a well-known Comrade slow advance :
They met—they spoke not—but with one consent,
Each on the parapet, his mailed form leant;
Each looking down, in mute attention stood,
Eveing the noiseless camp, the murmuring wood ; 80
The meaning silence, daring Mahud broke,
As with low voice, and scowling brow he spoke :
(Famed for deep art, and flowing speech, that bent
To higher powers, a ready instrument.)

MAHUD.

* Methink Hasanor, this dead stillness round—
This sleeping camp—in which no martial sound

Of trump , or drum , or neighing steed , inspires
Our drooping Comrades , with their wonted fires—
Resembles more an Arab's peaceful tent ,
'Than moorish tribe on war's stern purpose bent.—
What means our Chieftain ?—can that soul of flame ,
Which flattery ne'er could soothe , nor terror tame ,
Submit at last to the soft baby power
Of this fair Donna ?—curses seize the hour ,
That brought the christian Captive to his sight ,
'And the ill chances , that delayed her flight!—
'Three days have now elapsed since we pursued
'A flying foe , and bathed our swords in blood—
'Three days that Foe has rallied up his force ,
And here , 'tis said , he turns his vengeful course ; too
When at our feet each Warrior had been laid ,
Nor one proud Christian 'scaped the moorish blade !
Oh ! who can think upon such shame , and keep
Their lips sealed up , and hid their anger sleep !
That cannot I—I'll turn me to my home ,
And e'er again for empty purse I roam ,

I'll beg and slave!—he paused, and fixed his look,
To mark how such bold hint Hasanor took :
But to each Soldier's heart was Alcon dear,
And few there were that even now could hear
That name reviled—that loved yet dreaded name,
Immortalized by stainless, hard-won fame.

HASANOR.

« Hold, Comrade, hold!—restrain thine angry zeal!—
Our glory's stain, our plunder's loss I feel,
Perchance as keen as thou—yet let us still,
Obedient bend to our high Chieftain's will!—
We've shared his fortune, when his arm has led
Through streams of blood, choaked with the trampled dead,
To victory, to plunder, and to fame—
And shall we be first to brand with shame 120
The gallant Leader, at whose war-blast's sound,
Whole nations quake, and armies tremble round!
Mahomet forbid!—'tis but a passing cloud,
'Twill cease ere long our brighter hopes to shroud. »—

MAHUD.

« Soon may it do so!—yet I have a fear—
Art sure we're safe?—is no one sleeping near?—
I tell thee Friend, this christian Girl hath twined,
With such deep cunning, round his haughty mind,
She leads by soft, but absolute command,
The untamed lion, with an Infant's hand.—
They're friends of old—dost thou forget the time,
When Alcon sought Castilia's courtly clime—
Truce being proclaimed—and 'guised in masked array,
Joined in the tourney—bore the prize away?—
And when unknown to her, the Princess bound
The Victor's 'broidered scarf, his form around?
The Spanish Knights displeased, with wonder scan,
And envious eve, the stern and mighty Man;
The Maidens smile applause—when lo! the Knight
Doffs his steeled vizor—and their awe-struck sight 140
Beholds the Chief, right well to Europe known—
Her moorish Conqueror—unarmed—alone! »—

HASANOR.

« Bravo! by yon good heaven, such glorious scene,
Full worth his noblest battle must have been! »—

MAHUB.

« By law of Chivalry, the warrior-Guest
Was with all courtesy detained, and prest
To grace by his abode, the Spanish court,
During its days of tournament and sport:—
Freely he trusted to their knightly word—
When Spanish pride, and policy concurred,
Their gay, and high magnificence so show,
Heaping with honors the illustrious Foe.—
The young Infanta, then, he saw and loved—
And soon the luckless passion mutual proved—
Nay more, by babbling tongues it hath been known,
They oft did meet in private, and alone.—
And there, the Maid, with some dire witchcraft fraught,
Chained him with potent spell, and e'en 'tis thought
From our dread Prophet, turned his wandering mind
And to her christian creed the Chief inclined.— 160

Thou startst—yet mark the sequel—torn from hence—
(Sure Heaven in mercy, interposed defence!)
Gloomy, severe, and thoughtful, he became,
Less and less mindful of heroic fame,
Snatching away the Soldiers just reward,
The Maid and plunder, purchased by his sword;
Preaching humanity--accursed trash!
Unheard, unknown, where moorish sabres clash.--
Meanwhile the Fair to convent-cell withdrew,
Hiding her hopeless love from mortal view;
The convent's stormed--the fraudulent Maid is taken—
And from that moment victory's forsaken—
Honor, glory, wealth, have lost their charms,
All, all resigned, and buried in her arms!—
Nay check thine honest rage--one instant pause,
While of these arts I guess the secret cause—
Dost thou not mark?—her beauty's the resort
Used by her bigotted and wily Court,
To warp his mind, to bend, to win him o'er,
From Mahomet's pure faith, to christian lore;

To turn his arm against his country's breast,
And give Iberia's trembling terrors rest. —

HASANOR.

« I see it all—fools! fools!—must we remain
Dupes of a Girl--the mighty Alcon's bane!—
Down with her to the dust!—her christian blood
Shall lave our thirsty swords, in life's last flood.—
Say, is there none in all this camp can feel
The spirit of a Moor!—our army's weal,
Our hopes of fame, of plunder, 'fall tho' gained,
And we disgraced turn home, with brands unstained,
To a broad-gunning multitude!—lead on!—
I see thy drift—what' e'er betides—I'm one. »—

MAHUD.

« Enough, brave Hasanor!—'tis as I thought—
Thy heart is roused, with Soldier's honor fraught—
Yet check thy warmth—we must be cautious, cool,
Submitting our resolves to reason's rule.—

Aided by many a noble Chief, the scheme
Is all but ripe—and Comrade, well I deem,
Thy steadiness and secrecy will hold ;
And ere the morrow's noon-tide sun unfold , 200
More shalt thou learn—and now farewell —
The morning watch comes round—the pale stars tell
Of dawn's approach—and yonder ruby streak
Warns me an unprest couch awhile to seek. —

All hail! refulgent Morn! thy roseate light
Chasing the gloomy visions of the night ,
Brings pleasure undefinable—and hope, and peace,
From brooding sorrow, yield a short release.—
Oh! who can taste thy fragrant breath, and mark
Thy glowing form steal o'er the shadowy dark—
Thine orient tears in soft profusion shed,
Thy pale-grey mantle, and reluctant tread—
Oh! who can mark them, and not own the Power,
That most reveals itself in this mild hour '—
Not feel each care, each boding dread give way
To the bright gleam of renovated day?—

T'was thus, with that fair Maid—she watched the star
Glimmer athwart her prison's iron bar—
And as she watched, a load of sorrow prest, 220
A chill and deadly burthen on her breast,
Tearless and fixed, the raised and aching eye
Bespoke that rooted, inward melancholy,
Which coldly callous or to joy, or pain,
Fear still may threaten, Hope still soothe in vain.—

Once more in fancy, did the tourney high,
And stranger-Chieftain captivate 'her eye—
Once more, around his manly limbs she threw
With timid hand, the scarf of varied hue—
Her blush—his lingering gaze—remembrance stole,
Each long-loved image o'er her softened soul.—
But ah! Remorse with fraudulent Pleasure came,
Grim Horror waved young Love's resistless flame,
Cherished in agony, and born in shame.—
She dwells with anguish on that fatal hour,
When none, save Heaven, had marked the secret bower,

The forced confession, which reluctant told
Of mutual love!—ye Powers of vengeance hold!—
She kneels—the affrighted Altar hears the vow,
As bending to the earth her pallid brow, 240
She adjures the deep eternal wrath, if ere
Another love, her wedded bosom share!—
All on this earth—and every hope on high,
She yields, with him to live—with him to die.—
It is enough—the jealous Moor knows well
How firm that oath—that neither Earth nor Hell
Can solve its power—upon her lip he sealed
The contract dark—to One alone revealed—
And sternly raised his gauntled hand on high,
And fixed above his unbelieving eye:—
'Whether thou dwell 'st in heaven—thou great Unknown'
Or in the womb of chaos seek thy throne—
Or through the boundless veins of Nature, give
Thyself in her—the life, by which we live—
Where 'er—what 'er thou art—thy presence now,
I first invoke!—to thee her sacred vow!—

Hear!—and avenge in all thy terrors fraught
THYSELF condemned if e'en abjured in thought! —
The dreadful invocation pierced her soul—
And ever and anon, like death-bed toll, 269
It rung upon her 'ear—while dire remorse
Preyed on her mind, with never-ceasing force.—
And oft when to confession's ritual led,
Owning some partial fault—the Phantom dread
Would rush with every horror to her mind—
Hear oath, her person, and her love resigned
To that dark Infidel—her country's foe—
Whose dripping hands, e'en as they clasp her, glow
With blood of her own kindred!—breathless, pale,
Her eye-lids close, her quivering accents fail—
Then sudden from the affrighted Father flies,
And to her chamber's lone retirement hies.—
It haunts her couch—and oft in restless sleep,
She shudders, as o'er a boundless, burning deep,
The stern Moor drags her from an Angel's arms,
And whispers :—« Mine, are Rosalina's charms! »—

Those woes recalled, contrition half disarm,
And lend to present pain, a secret charm.—
She dwelt too on her haughty Brother's look,
As at the convent-grate, he proudly took 280
Her last farewell—his brow of stern contempt,
Too plain discovered all he thought, and meant.—
(Harsh was that Brother,—high, revengeful, cold,
But a deep statesman, and a warrior bold.)—

Yet as o'er passing scenes thus pondering long,
She viewed their dark and melancholy throng,
With more than apathy—no dread could move,
No thought impressed her soul—except its love—
Conscious to that alone, at times she smiled,
With blush so faint, and look so touching wild,
It might have melted e'en Don Carlos' soul,
And one unguarded sigh from pity stole.—
The morning broke—roused from her waking dream,
She hailed its early blush, and welcome beam;
Listened to the wood-warbler's note of praise,
Beheld the rising sun's majestic rays,

Fancied the flowers*unfolding meet the day,
And felt the fresh'ning breeze of morning play:—
And tho' a rugged, tented steep was seen,
Not a soft vale, nor meadows waving green; 300
And tho armed, swarthy Warriors met her sight,
Not ruddy Rustics, with their heart so light,
And their step so free—yet Nature still,
Could smooth the brow, and tame the sullen will—
She bends in fervent, supplicating prayer.
And confidence prevailed above* despair.—

The moorish Zelia marked her placid brow,
As with feigned veneration bending low,
She greets the royal Captive—witching soft,
Her voice, her air, enchant—yet lingering oft,
Beneath the downcast lid of that dark eye,
A strange expression lurked, severe, and sly;
Ill suited to the artless, playful mood,
Which sought to please, and approbation wooed.—

ZELIA.

« Permit thy Slave, O Princess ! to rejoice,
With deep respect, in fond affection's voice,
That on this morn as heretofore, no tear,
No bitter sigh, have filled her heart with fear.—
It is my daily wish, my nightly prayer,
That from thy royal breast, each painful care, 326
Each apprehensive dread may fade away,
And peace and hope may bless thy happier day—
For sure I am, that thy illustrious name,
Thy matchless beauty, and thy virtuous fame,
(That long has found our Mauritanian shore).
Will be revered by every gallant Moor—
Ardent to prove, tho' chivalry's unknown,
That polished generosity's their own :—
Nay, they may urge this rivalry so far,
That soon relinquishing the rights of war,
Our Caliph may, from all condition free,
Restore thee to thy home, and liberty ;

If not—no ransom will he e'er refuse;
Then, noble Lady, I entreat thee lose
Regret and fear, that on thy pallid check,
In character too plain, their power bespeak!—

ROSALINE.

« I thank thee Zelia, for thy love professed,
Thy fond attempt to soothe my cares to rest;—
Fain would I court the false, consoling balm,
Fain would I snatch the dear, delusive calm: 340
Alas! it may not be—hope—hope has flown—
I've trusted it too much—and now 'tis gone!—
Yet in the hour of pain, one single thought
Has come, with such exquisite rapture fraught—
Such soothing power—that all this earthly woe
Melted, like frost-work to the sun-beam's glow. »—

ZELIA.

« Oh! well I know that thought—the christian creed,
To other worlds our weary step, would lead:—

Oh ! would'st thou stay his silvery wing,
First bind it with a silken string,
Viewless and light as air ;
The blooming Captive may not feel
The fetters, that around him steal,
Tho' linked by Houried Fair.—

Away from hence ! soft visions fly !
That scorn the power, or droop and die .
Beneath the hand of Tyranny !

Here must ye never glow—
Afric's dark Maids, tho' formed to rove
Through fond Affection's sacred grove—
Her paths of purest, warmest love—
Are dedicate to woe.

Yet, shall a dungeon wall restrain,
Shall bars of steel, and slavery's chain,
Attempt those Maids to bind ?—
Oh ! Love can climb the dungeon-wall, 400
And barriers steeled before him fall,
Nor leave a trace behind.—

Vain are your Guards—your terrors vain—
Your jealous fondness, we disdain,
And while no thoughts of heaven refrain,
To live, and love, we're free.
Thinkst thou that ought can Woman hold,
When grasped by force, exchanged for gold,
A heartless toy, that's bought and sold,
A lovely Slave for thee ?—
Yet, ope thy haram's barred gate,
Disown thy power, resign her fate,
An angel will she prove—
Radiant athwart the waning night,
Mildly majestic, chastely bright,
And dignified by love !—

Scarce had the Syren ceased, when treading near
A well-known footstep greets their listening ear—
Yet rare it was for Alcon to intrude,
Save by permission, on her solitude.—
He entered—Zelia closely drew around
Her flowing veil, and bending to the ground,

Instant retired—the lovely Captive viewed,
With secret dread his dark, portentous mood.—
'And tho' the bitter feeling of distress,
Fled at the smile of female tenderness,
And pleasure lightened in that cold, stern eye,
To mark in her's the dew of sympathy—
Yet on that brow there sate a solemn gloom,
As tho' he meditated o'er her tomb.—
Some fixed resolve seemed labouring in that breast,
Mixed with a dread he would have fain repress.

« Why dost thou greet me with a tear, my love—
As tho' the purpose of my soul to move,
'Ere to thy shrinking sense it be revealed ?
—The crisis of our fate, this morn hath sealed—
A fearful crisis—for e'er Night doth cloud,
Yon azure heaven, with her sable shroud,
On our fresh grave the sickly moon may gleam,
The morrow blush—nor wake us with its beam— 440
The cold dank sod may prove our nuptial bower,
The thorns of love to share—but not its flower.—

O Maiden ! chastest—lovelicst—and best—
My sole reward—my glory's crown and rest !—
The last—most perfect proof of love I give—
Be mine—or e'er this night I cease to live !—
Be mine—fulfil my hope, thy solemn vow,
Or to the traitor's steel, my neck I bow !—
Nay more—thou knowst me firm—and in that breast—
'Tho' thou should'st kneel and weep—implored—carest—
Nay, shudder not—this sacrilegious hand
Must plunge the sure, the unrelenting brand.—
I would not leave thee to the scoff of those,
From whose hard heart no milky softness flows—
Dishonored by another death—by heaven !
Nor to another's arms shalt thou be given.—
Mine—irrevocably mine—and if not here,
In death I wed thee.—Treason, Vengeance, rear
'Their unfurled standard to the menaced sky—
Consent, we live—refuse, and we must die.—

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Still as a statue of Despair, she stood—
That pang—it was too keen—that blow too rude—

A flush indignant passed her dewy cheek—
Her eye's soft beams unwonted anger speak—
Her voice's tone, severe, and calm, and cold,
The bitterness of wounded fondness told :—
« Take then my blood—oh! thou unfeeling Moor!—
Would that thy steel had shed it long before!—
Gladly to death will I unveil this breast,
For I have suffered much, and long for rest—
This is the deadliest pang thy hand can deal—
All else, I do not dread, and cannot feel—
That oath—I know it well—it makes me thine—
Yet wouldst thou force, and drag me to the shrine?—
Is there no hope between the cold, dark tomb,
The violated altar's sterner doom?—
—Call not thy passion love—'tis very hate,
Disguised too long and well—revealed too late! »

Deep glowed that Warrior's swarthy cheek from ire—
His fallen brows were knit—his eye flashed fire— 480
« Oh! thou fair ingrate!—thou false, blooming thing!
How deadly is that aim!—how keen that sting!

What have I nourished in this tortured breast?—
A coiling, lovely serpent at the best—
Fed with my blood, and cherished long in pain—
My hope, my solace—sought, and loved in vain!—
But I can twine thee from around my heart,
'Tho' the big life-drops trickle as we part—
And I can spurn and trample thee to death,
'Tho' with thy latest groan, I yield my breath.—
Inconstant Woman!—here take back thy vow,
For thou art cold—cold as thy mountain snow—
—She weeps!—nay—chase those falling tears away!—
Forgive me—for I know not what I say! »—
He leant upon the couch, and gently drew,
To his dark brow, her hand of whitest hue—
He prest it close—it eased the burning pain—
Loosened the fiery bandage of his brain.—

« Do not forget for this, the love I bear—
The proofs I've given—by our God I swear, 500
Thou art more precious to thine Alcón's heart,
Than all this Earth can yield, yon Heaven impart—

Impetuous are the movements of my soul,
And absolute each passion's high control—
But thou—oh! thou canst soothe and bind their force,
And lead them to their fight, their destined course.—
—What—yet no word—no look! »—he bit his lip,
E'en till the starting blood it forced to drip :—
« Tis well—'tis well—Princess, one moment more,
And all thy fears and sufferings shall be o'er!—
I have not learnt to whine, and sigh, and plain,
Of Lady's cruelty, and Lover's pain—
Such suit becomes not *me*—words ne'er can prove,
How fond, how fierce, how firm, is Alcon's love!—
All have I yielded to a fondness feigned—
Yea all—my hard-won fame itself is stained!—
Deceiving Christian!—was it not for thee,
That I renounced a Moslem's piety?
Embraced thy purer creed—by thee subdued,
I clasp the Cross, and trust a Saviour's blood;— 520
For thee, have I bowed down 'neath loads of grief,
To which, not Glory's self could bring relief;—

For thee, infatuated I forbore
Too long, to rouse the battle's sinking roar,
Till foul-faced 'Treason, Shame, Remorse, around,
Raise their strong arm to drag me to the ground—
They shall not wait—and yet— speak but the word,¹
And with one blow I break the Traitor's sword!—
Say but, this night shall link our nuptial-bånd,
And Treason shrinks beneath my powerful hand!
All is prepared—the chapel, and the hour,
A captive Priest will ope the sealed bower,
And make thee ever mine—Oh! I conjure,
By the affection ardent, constant, pure,
That I so oft, and even thou hast sworn,
By all the sufferings both so long have borne;
By those still more acute, more stern and dread,
That threaten to bend down thy helpless head—
Oh! I conjure thee, ere it be too late,
To bind the knot, that none may separate!— 540
—She speaks not—moves not—fool! what do I here!—
—Why woman-born that I should shed a tear,

That ne'er disgraced my Sire !—for thee it fell—
—I loved thee once—do now—farewell—farewell !—
The deep sound faltered—with averted eye,
And quivering lip, and agonizing sigh—
And hand upon his ample forehead strained—
The sable Warrior stood—his soul disdained
To bend and sue, altho' to madness pained.—

Stern was the pause—when twining softly round,
Her lovely arm, its thrilling fetters wound—
—Need I say more ?—the lip, that mutely prest,
The form that shrank not, tho' his arm caress—
The glowing cheek veiled by each pitying tress,—
The deep-blue eye suffused in tenderness—
Oh ! they reveal—what words might ne'er reveal—
Of love, of guilt—the sacrifice, and seal !—
The heart, that feeling seldom touched before,
Now swelled and softened to its inmost core—
He spoke not—but his stern and iron eye,
Gazed, till it melted into ecstasy;—

And brightning o'er his wild and gloomy brow,
Sate happiness, unknown, unfelt, till now.

Oh! that those moments in our life so rare,
Should mock the grasp, like fancied forms of air!
As the dark clouds emit ethereal light,
Deep'ning the gloom, by flashes false, and bright;
As some dear, lovely vision of our sleep,
Quits the enraptured wretch to wake and weep;
Those fleeting pleasures, transports wild and fair,
But leave the memory of what they were—
Raise us from earth, to sink us down again,
To darker, colder loneliness of pain—
Oh strange! that joys engendering remorse,
Should have a keener bliss, a loftier force!—
The calm delights, that Peace and Virtue bring,
Boast not their rapture—but disown their sting.

Deep at the mountain's shaggy foot—where wreathed
The wild, thick foliage, as it faintly breathed,

Scorched by the noon-day sun—in stern debate 580
Retired apart, the traitor-Chieftains sate.—
Many there were of brave and old renown,
That trembled still 'neath Alcon's haughty frown—
And many too, in youthful valor high,
That still must quake 'neath Alcon's piercing eye—
From envy some—others by art misled—
But more by hopes of proud ambition fed—
All shrouding close, their scheme of traiterous feud,
Neath the worn veil of patriotic good—
Resolved that Warrior's fall, whose mighty name
Defied 'till now the very breath of shame.
Discord's envenomed seed had long been sown,
Now, by this fostering crisis, sudden grown
To rank maturity—his searching eye
Saw, and contemned, the nerveless treachery.

Amurath had ceased—still the assembly hung,
In mute attention, on his aged tongue—
When youthful Osman (proud, and bold, and brave,
But hard of heart, and Passion's servile slave),

Rose with his mien of pride, and eye of rage, 600
To thwart the timid craftiness of age :

« Chieftains ! Conquerors ! Sons of Liberty !—

Oh ! that ye were but as your Parent free !

I mourn the chains, that close and closer still,

Rivet and tame ye to a Despot's will !—

His fame alone, spreads—blossoms, on our graves—

For him we conquer—we ourselves are Slaves.—

The laurels, that our noblest blood has dyed,

Put wreath his brow, and glut his swollen pride—

He scorns and tramples on the sacrifice,

That feeds his gross ambition, ere it dies.

What are we ?—but the pamperers of his fame,—

Degraded things on which he builds his name,

Our own forgotten—to the dust we crawl,—

Unseen we struggle—unremembered fall.

Ay—let him spurn us ! we deserve his scorn—

For him we die—for him perchance were born.

His haughty sternness, and his deep contempt,

Respect ne'er softened, nor submission bent—

Silent—apart—his chilling sneer confounds 620
The grave debate, or mirth's more genial sounds—
Wisdom and Age his fearful presence own,
And Youth's proud glow is deadened by a frown.
Ay—let us crouch, and lick the hands, that deal
The wound we court—the blow we may not feel!

‘ I’m plain of speech, and trained to deeds of gore,
Despise the unwarlike art of glozing lore—
Yet would invoke the God of Eloquence,
If by his aid, I might but win the sense,
And rouse the ardor, yonder crippled Chief
Would fain repress, to bring his fears relief.
Ill-timed delays, and cautions vain and cold,
Suit not the counsels of the wronged and bold—
Warriors’—this night—this night we will be free—
’Tis stamped by Fate, with seal of liberty!
The army’s ripe—and to our scheme is given
A wondrous chance—nay, ’tis the hand of Heaven.—
Our Caliph dreads this Tyrant—doubts his aim—
His wild ambition, and his borrowed fame.—

And would not Christian Europe smile to know 640
The great, the proud, the formidable foe,
Our arms have vanquished?—offspring of the feud,
One kind, one blooming Girl, we have subdued!—
She conquers in her turn—her captives we,
Till satiated passion leaves us free!
Oh! are ye Moors!—and can ye tamely bow
To infamy like this, that clogs ~~ye~~ now?—
Oh! are ye Men!—and can disown your race—
Disclaim your birth-right by such foul disgrace?—
Better to perish at the galley's toil,
Or with our labor to enrich the soil,
We've fought and bled for!—chose, and ye obtain
Vengeance and freedom—or a lasting chain!—
Would ye not shame your Sires—draw forth your sword,
Swear by their graves—and by your sacred word—
By our dread Prophet—that this night shall burst
That bond of power—so galling and accursed!—
He waved his glittering sabre at the pause—
Low, deeply ran the murmur of applause—

Then burst the loud, invigorating cry, 660
Of zeal approving, resolute, and high :—
« We swear!—we swear! » they shake the echoing ground—
And naked sabres clash and gleam around—
When—in the midst—as if the teeming Earth
Had sudded yielded the gigantic birth—
Eying with silent scowl, the rebel brood—
Their Chief himself—the mighty Alcon stood!
With folded arms, and mantle closely drawn—
And eye of fire, and smile of bitter scorn.

As when the torrid whirlwind's winged course,
Rises with growl terrific, deep, and hoarse—
And in its columned strength o'erpowers the car—
Is sudden hushed to calmness still and drear :
So, that foreboding hum, that thundering yell,
In instant—sullen—awe-struck silence fell.—
Each turbaned head, in proud reluctance bends,
Each unsheathed sabre, to the ground descends.
Unmoved he stood—and in contemptuous tone, 680
Thus mocked their high resolve and courage flown :

« It grieves me, Chieftains, that my presence here,
Should seem to awe with sudden gloom and fear—
How comes it, that I innocently mar,
For once the shout of incantment or war
Proceed—your festive mirth I gladly join—
Or mingle in the warlike rites divine » —
He paused—none dared reply—backward he slung
The cloak, that from his martial shoulders hung;
From its bright sheath, leapt forth the sleeping steel,
As urged by wrongs it all but seemed to feel—
Retreating to the tented verge he stood,
Like a proud rock, that spurns the ocean flood—
Upon his lowering brow, Defiance sate,
Severe and calm—and undebased by hate —

What dark'ning Spirits o'er these regions brood ?—(*)
Spain's airy Guardians mourn their Charge subdued—

(*) The firm belief of every class of Moors in the existence and power of Enchantment, and in the agency of Spirits, sufficiently accounts for an address to their superstition, rather than to their reason.—

And hellish arts, unearthly vengeance pour
On souls, that Allah's love protects no more :—
Their venom creeping through each morbid vein,
To deeds of madness, fires the wandering brain,
And on the Victor, links the Captive's chain.—
Misguided Warriors! may celestial might
Nerve and defend ye, in the awful fight!
For ne'er on minds so great, so true, so brave,
Could ought but loathsome spells, such crime engrave.—
What shakes reliance on this conquering arm,
Save the deep workings of infernal charm?
Who, from our brows would snatch the laurelled shade
And cast it with our bleaching bones to fade?
Who arms us 'gainst our common Parent's breast,
Leagued with her foes, to bow her stainless crest?
—The murky Demons of the christian land,
That yet in arms against the Godhead stand—
And on the mind of mortal Man reveal
The ban allowed—the scourge we still must feel.—

« Sons of the Prophet! Chieftains! Moors! on all,
Who venerate those sacred names I call!
By the tomb'd honors of the mighty dead,
That, from the cerements of their silent bed, 720
Would rise in vengeance to redeem their claim,
And crush the base inheritors of fame—
By Afric's Queen—dark Ruler of the sea—
Her golden glory—boasted liberty—
By those yet dearer ties the heart of Man,
Revered and owned, ere reason's dawn began—
I bid ye cease this weak, rebellious jar,
That would annul the nobler brunt of war!
Your country's scorn—derision of your foes—
Despised by him, whose greatness ye oppose—
Cease these vain struggles!—impotent as proud—
Nor thus the mid-day of your splendor shroud!
For know ye not your fall involved in mine,
The source, from whence ye radiate and shine—
That in your wisdom, ye would fain reprove
Iberia's dread—and Mauritania's love?

Wait but the word.—A sudden hope returns—
 That eye, no more with rage infuriate burns—
 That brow is calm—and placid paleness there,
 Speaks of some strange resolve—perchance to spare.—
 « Hence, to oblivion, and an unblest grave,
 Remove that Maniac—mercy could not save!—
 So perish every traitor-foe!—so all,
 Whose soaring folly rises but to fall!—
 He was a Rebel—but these Chieftains here,
 Are warriors true, and friends oft-tried and dear.—
 The faults of Greatness, in its splendor fade—
 —No meaner hand may draw them into shade!—
 Twas o'er.—by clemency alone subdued,
 Each at the Conqueror's feet his oath renewed.—
 Pride, hatred, vengeance, soften into zeal,
 And all express—what many feign to feel.—

« Now, Chieftains, Soldiers, gird your war belts on!
 For ere the morrow streak the early dawn,
 We'll rouse the lurking Spaniard from his lair,
 We'll blow the battle-blast—and once more dare

Iberia's sons to arms!—away! away!—
The morrow, Moors, shall be a glorious day! —
He spoke—and loud, and high, the applauses rang—
Each distant Sentinel roared back the clang—
The name of Alcon rent the yielding air,
And all was tumult, joy, and Moslem's warlike prayer.—

END OF SECOND CANTO

ALCON MALANZORE.

CANTO THIRD.

SPIRIT of War avaunt!—oh! rest awhile,
Thy mail-clad limbs in earth's deep-bedded glen!
Yet a short moment, bid Affection smile—
And suppliant Mercy trembling rise again!
Thou wilt not?—stern, demoniac Source of woe!
Immoveable, tho' Angels round thee bent,
To mourn the evil, God permits below,
By Man produced—his crime and punishment.
Conceived perchance to work the eternal doom,
To form one mighty, dark, and desolated tomb.

But turn thee Muse, from themes too dreary wild,
Gigantic—far beyond thy softer power!—
Uncherished—immatured—a lonely Child,
That gathers, ere it fades, the mountain-flower!
Oh strive not yet to soar thine infant wing,
To nature's sources, or to worlds unknown!
Such awful themes that Bard alone might sing,
To whom unveiled, the sacred mystery shone.—
Earth yields too much—and Fancy's fairy field—
Where thou mayst rove forgot, neglected, or concealed.—20

Oh! rather turn to that fantastic Power,
Whose genial softness breathes through Nature's frame!
Disperse the clouds, that gather round his bower,
To dim his wildest, purest, brightest flame!
It may not be—hope's dazzling colours glow,
A moment, full, and rich, and rare, they linger;
Then round them, deeper, deadlier shadows throw,
And fade for ever 'neath his rosy finger.—
Her lyre, the Muse bends o'er, with tearful eye,
And tunes its amorous chord, to Melancholy.—

The golden Eve her dewy mantle spread,
Balmy and soft, her gentle influence shed,
With changing purple streaked the western sky,
Whose brightning forms in rich confusion lie —
Evening returns—but Andalusia's plain,
In dreary silence, hails her once-loved reign,
The signal now no more, for jocund mirth,
The green-sward dance, or rustic cheerful hearth—
Those scenes are gone—and all, save one hill-side,
Is gloom severe, unbroken, lone, and wide — 40
But on that hill twas motion all—and rude
Harsh clamors, on the startled ear intrude,
Gaunt, armored figures issue from each tent,
Merge through the trees, or pass the battlement,
The clanging buckler, and the song of war,
The neighing steed, that lists the sound afar,
Tell to declining day, that it must rise
On gilded Battle's bloody sacrifice —

Gradual it sinks, and every jarring sound
Is hushed to sullen hum, low murmuring round—

Then settles in a calm portentous, drear,
Yet more terrific to the shrinking ear.
Sudden, the winds, from their tempestuous bed,
Burst with loud howl, and swept the hoary head
Of each maternal mount—the lowering sky,
In muttering drops, foretells the change that's nigh;
Which Guadalquiver struggling heaves to meet,
And foams in rage against the mountain's feet;
While his swelled torrents deep and rushing pour,
And utter darkness thickly shadows o'er.— 64

Close shrouded in her white novice's veil,
Bearing a lamp—as statue still and pale,
Rosaline stood, and listened to the gale,—
That hour was near—that dark, and fatal hour—
Ill-omened roared the blast, that shook the tower—
Ill-omened rode the midnight hags of air—
Rolled the deep thunder—flashed the pale-blue glare.—
More awful still, the low and ceaseless tone,
That warns the secret soul, ere crime is done—

That spark from heaven—that little light that guides,
Unerring beacon, o'er the slumbering tides;—
It varies not—'till baffled, stifled, spurned,
Vice darkens o'er the flame, that yet had burned—
It rises not again, till on that day,
When brilliant with a last, sepuchral ray,
It bursts upon the soul, whose bonds are riven—
—A grim attendant to the gates of heaven!—

Unwonted clamor, voices rude and high,
Mix with the tempest tumult of the sky—
And yet—a more confused and fearful sound, 30
Appals her soul—she gazes wildly round—
“Hark!—Blessed Mother!—do my senses fail!”—
Again I hear it—murder's in the gale!—
Forward she sprung—a thousand nameless fears
Rush to her mind, as louder yet she hears
Those sounds of death—by mental suffering pained,
Each weakened nerve was quick to anguish strained.—
Down lightly o'er the turret's broken stairs,
Her way she forced each gaping chasm dares—

Bereft of terror for herself—one thought,
Confused yet fearful, on her soul was wrought.—
Winding and long, the mouldering steps descend,
In low and vaulted passages they end :—
She paused, and eyed with feelings of despair,
Their dark and yawning mouths—uncertain where
To bend her chance-led path.—’Twas silence all—
On these subterrene vaults, no echoes fall—
Save as she listened, Fancy caught some sound,
That murmured far, or rustled softly round.—
She gazed with straining eye—she breathed his name—100
Alas! deceiving hope—no Alcon came.—
And now the fateful midnight hour is gone—
And she is here, abandoned and alone!—
Hist!—a red quivering light in distance played,
And deeper glows amidst surrounding shade—
A female form, with timid, cautious pace,
Slowly advanced—that step and half-veiled face,
Betray thee Zelia!—in one hand she bore
A ponderous key—her cheek, death’s livery wore,

'Twas ashy pale—and oft her large dark eye
Rolled round, with look of dread and agony.—
Close creeping by the wall, with noiseless tread,
She gained the steps—there paused, and bent her head,
In fixed attention—“ All’s yet safe ”—she said—
“ Sleep on!—sleep on! ”—and through an archway near,
The light and figure instant disappear.—

Slow sank her head upon that Parian arm,
Whose dazzling whiteness matched her cheek’s pale charm—
Slow round her waist, the falling tresses fling
Their silken veil, in many a wreathing ring— 120
In those dark depths, a form so fair and still,
Seemed magic wrought by Wizard’s direful will.—

Well, if thy sorrows had but ended here!—
Shame had not then sate towering on thy bier,
To scare e’en solitary Pity thence,
From what had slept almost in innocence.
Yon lingering sound forebodes some chance to save—
So fatal to the happiness it gave!—

The massive barriers loud and jarring close,
And nearer still the welcome echoes rose—
A sable figure glided thwart the gloom—
A torch's rays once more the walls relume.—
Her look a Stranger met, as from the shade,
Slowly emerged the sad and awe-struck Maid.—
The swarthy son of Nubia paused awhile—
Then bending low, with half mysterious smile :
• Princess—(for such I deem thee)—I intrude,
Perchance with step too bold, and speech too rude—
But the high import of my message claims
Resolve on danger, all delay inflames.— 140
I come to lead thee to thy nuptial shrine—
This signet ring proclaims the office mine.—
Presage of ill frowns on thy bridal hour,
For rising round our camp, the Christian Power
Gleams forth in arms.—Most beauteous Lady, haste !—
E'en while we speak the fatal die is cast .—
And seizing her resistless hand he drew
His lovely Charge, the darksome drear vault through—

Chill as the icy drop that oozed around,
And heavy plashed upon the deep-worn ground—
Sunk on her heart those words of passing grief—
They brought despair—a sullen, sad relief!—
Onward she moved—and not those sounds of fear,
That once more struck terrific on her ear—
The shrill, harsh tramp—the hoarse and distant drum—
The yell of war—the ceaseless, dreadful hum,
That broke the roar of winds, the crash of hail—
Could make her footstep pause, her firmness fail.

The vaults are passed—they gain the upper ground,
Where darkness, death, and horror, stalk around.—160
Yet closer to her faithful Guide she clung,
As the dim, quivering lamp, its red beam flung
On each wild figure, quickly darting by,
With look of stern and desperate agony.—
Round her chilled breast, she drew its flimsy veil—
—Hard beat the storm—and piercing blew the gale;—

While mingling curses, clamors, shouts, and cries,
Mock the rude elements, and rend the skies.—

A ruined portal-arch, at length they reach—
A chapel once—where many a yawning breach,
And broken cross, and crumbling pillar show
The well known traces of Spain's impious foe.—
Through heaped-up fragments, that impede their course,
Slowly yet firm, the tedious path they force.—
Here is she safe—for by their Chief's command,
Around the chapel watch a trusty band.—

Rosaline paused, and lowered her stedfast eye,
As 'merging from a columned ruin nigh,
The holy altar stood revealed—where sate,
(Fit tool for such relentless work of Fate,) 180
A lean and haggard Monk—whose livid cheek,
And glassy eye, Starvation's victim speak:
Scarce from his mantle did he raise his head,
As she approached, with soft and solemn tread.—

Slow at the altar's sacred foot she fell—
Altar no more—to her, the gate of hell!—
Strange rustlings o'er the aisle were heard—and then,
A laugh, a scream, unlike the voice of men—
She thought the graves had yielded up their dead,
To work the self-brought judgement on her head—
That gathering round, the evil Spectres stood,
To catch that oath—and trace it in her blood.—
Yet not a word, a sigh, betrayed that ought
Of such dire horror, on her breast was wrought—
Kneeling and motionless remained she there—
And seemed as she were wrapt in fervent prayer.

The Father crossed himself for very fear—
Watchful, the swarthy Eunuch bent his ear,
To list if 'mong the clamors rude and high,
He might the Moor's known voice, or step descry.—200
'Twas dreadful all—and horror creeping stole,
Even o'er the Nubian's insensate soul.—
But hark!—that sudden, loud and jarring tone,
Shakes the old walls to their foundation-stone!—

See!—the next instant on yon ruined heap,
 An armed and turbaned Warrior boldly leap!—
 —Now at the altar—seizing on his Bride—
 « Haste thee, old Man!—haste on! »—he breathless cried.—
 Round Rosaline's waist, one ironed arm he threw—
 Folded in his, her trembling hand he drew—
 The shuddering Priest bends o'er his opened book—
 —Twas said the lamp grew pale—the altar shook!—
 'Tis past!—vail martyred Spain, the haughty brow—
 Thy fane is sullied—and thy sainted honours bow!—

Hush thee my lyre!—thy murmuring echoes die,
 In note too drear and sad—that chord of woe,
 Oh! sound it not again!—

Nor let dark Care along thy soft strings sigh—
 Nor Horror's hand, with touch so dread and slow,
 Wake more the thrill of pain!—

220

But o'er the blushing bowers of Hymen throw
 Pleasure's enchanted net—where fond yet coy,
 She wreathes his sacred brows, with brightest buds of joy!—

It cannot be—my bended ear would fain
Catch from the wanton breeze, one single tone
Of soft and gay delight—

My hand would tune the chord of mirth in vain—
No breezes play—the cold harsh wind doth moan—
And all is gloomy night.—

The scattering leaves—the mountain-Spirit's groan
Suit well my soul—*there* dwells a darker shade—
Then murmur on my lyre!—since all doth bloom to fade.—

Roused from his gory couch, and transient rest,
The Fiend of battle rears his flaming crest;
Shakes his red locks, and bares his threatening arm,
And yelling calls around his demon swarm.—
Famine and Death bestride the blasting wind,
And pale-eyed Murder slowly skulks behind;
And grinning Vice, in Plunder's direful form,
Rolls his foul tongue, and hisses in the storm.— 240

Pause not dark Warrior at yon wizard grove—
Oh! turn thee Alcon from each dream of love!

Brace every nerve, and summon every power,
For death or conquest claim this fateful hour!—

From tent to tent, from rank to rank he flies,
Dares every danger, fate itself defies—
Rouses his fear-struck troops, inflames the brave,
Till e'en the timid trust his might to save—
And bodying forth in legions far and wide,
Downward they hurl the battle's rising tide,
And pressing fierce and firm, the mountain-brow
Teems her armed myriads on the struggling foe.—
Spain's haughty Warriors bend beneath the shock—
Slowly o'er delve and sward, and stream, and rock,
Backward they fall—by thickest darkness veiled,
The Crosier trembled, and Iberia quailed.—
On, as they came, each Moorish bosom glows,
Near, and more near, the silver Crescent rose,
And circling round, their firm-knit barriers close:—
Yet in this crisis dread of mortal war, 260
Scarce ought was heard, save elemental jar.—

Upon a huge and craggy steep, that reared
Its head o'er mighty depths, the foemen steered—
The mountain's hostile path, to them unknown,
To its wide grave, unconscious wins them on.—
The fatal error well did Alcon mark,
His eagle eye pierced through the shadowy dark—
Foresaw, that crowding on the towering height,
The sword or precipice must seal their fate.—
Cautious as brave, his gallant Moors advance—
The moment *now* !—he raised the signal lance—
One word he spoke—instant the bugle-tip—
Prest many a watchful Soldier's eager lip ;
He raised his lance—but ere that blast of death
Shook, by its awful sound, the mountain-heath,
A cry of horror from the ranks behind,
Loud swelling with the hoarse and rushing wind,
Unnerved each mailed breast, each lifted arm
—And all once more, was deep, confused alarm.—

Tis said that when that shout of woe was heard, 280
The lion Chief of Mauritania **FEARED** !—

Nay more—his frantic mien, his starting eye,
Struck colder terror, than that wild, strange cry—
It spoke the doom of her he loved—the tower
Had fallen to the overwhelming power,¹
That on the nether side had forced its way,
Where thousands yielded a reluctant prey;
And flushed and eager from the fight they pour,
To turn the tide of conquest from the Moor.—

Goddess of night! retain thine outraged sleep!—
Wake, Genius of the mountain! wake, and weep!—
And hurl thy tempest-horrors fast and far,
And smother for awhile the yell of War!
For when the drowsy Night unfolds her veil,
And green-robed Earth smiles 'neath the morning gale—
When Tempest hies him to his aerial bed,
And calmed Sierra slow unshrouds her head—
Oh! then, what scene of mortal guilt and woe,
Will bid the mingling tears of Nations flow!—
Stern Mauritania bends her turbaned pride, 300
And weeps her slaughtered Sons—whose life-blood dyed

The barren peaks of Spain :—each trembling gale
Swells with the Matron's shriek, the Orphan's wail—
Her dusky Virgins drop the silent tear,
And watch, and mourn, o'er Valoi's mouldering bier.—
And Spain, e'en conquering Spain, must check awhile
The flush of joy, and triumph's haughty smile;
And hail with pallid cheek, the hard-won good—
The glory blushing with her noblest blood.—

But ah! such woes demand a mightier strain—
Be mine to tell of less majestic pain :
The shock of Nations, and the din of War,
Ambitions stern and never-ending jar—
Suit not a simple Poet's wandering dream,
Who loves to rove where Fancy's golden beam
Illumes the flowery, fair, fantastic way,
That bows submissive to her frolic sway;
Where shadowy forms obey her mystic wand,
And weep or smile beneath her despot hand—
Oh! let me to her gentler sorrows turn, 320
And with the captive Rosalina mourn—

Bereft of sense—closed in her guarded tower—
Reckless of crime, that marked this dreadful hour—
The lovely Culprit lay—so cold, so fair,
It seemed as life itself were wanting there—
Sunk in its socket, scarce the quivering lamp
Broke sullenly, through thick surrounding damp—
'Twas lone and drear—the Soldiers watched beneath
And mused in silence on the work of death.—

Was it the wind that curdled o'er her breast
Or Fancys finger, that her cheek imprest ?
It cannot be—the touch was rude and bold
And still retains its strong and painful hold !
—She breathes—she moves—her eyes unveiling slow
A wild and wandering look around them throw ;
Then upwards raised those speaking orbs were bent
On the stern visage, that above them leant—
—It was Don Carlos!—from her couch she sprung,
And to his knees in suppliant anguish clung—
And bent her dewy cheek—and fain would hide 340
The tear of conscious guilt, and humbled pride.

But the cold terror, that his presence brought,
Soon chased each weaker and repenting thought.
His eye indignant, and his lip of scorn,
Betrayed the deep disguise they long had worn—
The still, dark malice of his altered brow,
Revealed the feelings immatured till now—
Rage and revenge, and pride, all gloomy sate—
And somewhat more—unknown almost to hate.—
He spurned her from him—vain the falling tear—
Unfelt the embrace so meek, and erst so dear.—
What words alas! could win the hardened breast,
That softened not, when thus implored, carest?—

“ Oh ! am I then, that lost, that guilty thing,
That e'en to her, who bore me, I might cling,
And sue in vain for mercy!—yes—'tis so—
Since e'en a Brother's heart can cease to glow,
With one kind thought, to her whom once he blest,
Whom once he loved, as nearest—tenderest—best!—
—But I have fallen whence I proudly stood, 360
And all to me are changed—'tis just—'tis good.—

Return O Prince!—the time is past to save—
Oh! leave me to my woe—my guilt—my grave!—
—Nay—think not to deceive!—thou knowest all—
Except that last, irrevocable fall.—
She paused—and turned her from his look of flame,
And strove to hide the crimson blush of shame.—

In silence stood the Prince—with eye bent down,
And firm-prest lip, and dark, foreboding frown,
That seemed as tho' his doubting soul was fraught,
With some contending and terrific thought:
« Follow! »—he cried, and waved his gauntled hand,
With look of cold but absolute command:
In vain she sought to pierce that evil mood—
The deep intent on which he seemed to brood:
In answer nought he deigned—except that word
Repeated twice, while twice he grasped his sword:
« I may not follow—whither wouldst thou lead?—
Oh! rather to the regions of the dead,
Cast me for ever!—than thy hand should spare, 380
To linger out the pangs, that bring me there.—

MERCY is all I ask!—my crime is great—
Unmatched for horror in this mortal state :—
Yet not from thee— my Brother—not from thee,
Ought I to feel the meed of infamy !—

A struggling sob, its painful passage forced,
And down her glowing cheek the big tears coursed—
Her accents failed—yet that beseeching look,
None but the Spaniard's callous heart could brook—
When, round his knees, her tender arms were thrown—
As one, who clinging to the bare rock-stone,
Views with terrific awe, and hopeless fear,
The rising surge its yawning bosom rear. —
And yet,—as Carlos glanced upon that form,
Wasted by sorrow's harsh and blasting storm;
And heard the thrilling voice, the suppliant prayer—
Some Angel whispered to his soul :—' forbear! '—
O'er his averted eyes, his hand he drew,
And turned him from the enervating view,
That, for an instant, shook his purpose high, 400
And robbed him of his dauntful energy :—

But ah! too soon came thoughts of injured pride—
*Of royal dignity—debased—defied—
*Of stain, that ever on his race must dwell—
The first, that e'er upon its lustre fell,
And that, how dark and deep!—the Culprit's head,
By Rome's unbending laws, was forfeited!—
For well 'twas known the untaught Moor had ne'er
Addressed to Christ or Mahomet a prayer;
And vain the hope, while shedding christian blood,
He loved or trusted on the Holy Rood.—

« Princess!—forbear to weep, or bend the knee!—
Tis sin as black as thine to pity thee.—
—Unloose thy hold, despised of Man and God!—
Thy touch is baneful as the serpent's goad.—
Arise—and follow me! »—he said, and grasped
The nerveless arm, that round his knee was clasped—
Then onwards dragged her to the prison-door,
And through its massy fold his victim bore.—
Scarce was she there, when o'er her closing view,
An unseen hand, a heavy bandage drew—

But ere 'twas bound, she saw, or thought she saw,
The form of Zeha to the shade withdraw—

Another too —perchance 'twas maddening Fear,
That bade such flitting, glimmering shapes appear—
That conjured 'thwart the gloom a human face,
And gave each reddening wall, a figure's trace.—

Whence is the power, that nerves the soul,
As hurrying to that dark, dread goal,
From which, no mortal hand can stay
Her swift and irresistible way?—

Whence is the power, that arms the breast,
Soothes Nature's struggling throes to rest,
Her first, great law abjures—when *near*
To all we most abhor and fear?—
Courage 'tis not—for that will flow,
And ebb again its passing glow:—
Nor christian faith—its strongest spell,
The Savage binds, and Infidel.—

—It is the chill and numbing sleep,
That sullen o'er the sense will creep,

When Fate unfolds her mighty doom,
And softly calls the Spirit home ;—
Listless alike to meet or fly,
It bends on Death its callous eye,
Fraught with Despair's wild apathy.—

 This is the strange and nameless power,
That calls on Man, in war's stern hour,
To ply his work of blood—and he,
Who from the groan of pain would flee,
And sicken at the mangled corse,
And shrink 'neath Danger's distant force,
At any time but this—will now,
Meet with a calm, unchanging brow,
The Spectre, in his direst form ;
Smile at the battle's deadly storm,
And curious mark the fatal ball,
In harmless rage, beneath him fall ;
Will drink with senseless ear, the groan,
And agonizing cries of one,
Unfeared, unhated, and unknown—

Will celdly glance, where dark congealed,
The crimson tide of life is sealed;
And careless spur his war-steed by,
Alike o'er dead, and those that die.—

Yet if one arm should burst the trance,
And tremble 'neath the lifted lance,
Even but *one*, to nature true,
Should shrink and shudder at the view
Of coming death—that coward heart,
(E'en as the Indian's venom'd dart,
Whose morbid canker fires each vein,
In swiftest rage, and maddening pain);
Will, with contagion fierce and dire,
Allay Delusion's sparkless fire,
And chill to ice the seeming flame;
While Panic rears his brow of shame,
And bears in triumph, from the field,
Whole armies 'neath his torpid shield.—

Tis this, that on the sick Man's bed,
Its station holds, when Hope has fled;
He marks his weeping offspring round,
And bows to the orison's low sound;
One calm and listless look he throws,
And fearless turns him—to repose.—

T'was this, that on young Rosaline's breast,
In that dread hour, its touch impressed—
That icy touch—so chill—so drear—
As froze the balm of hope, and broke the bonds of fear.—

Forced through the bowels of the mountain, lay
A path, impervious to the beam of day;
Opened perchance to serve some purpose dread
Of tyrant-Chief, long numbered with the dead.—
Refuge of fear, or hidden cruelty,
Of both a monument, these regions lie.—
Narrow and low, the steep and dark descent,
In many a lengthened, dangerous winding bent;

Bereft and closed from air, the stifled breath,
Tis said, in one short hour would gasp in death;
Inhaling but the earthy vapour round;
Rising most baneful from the oozing ground; 500
The mole here plied her subterranean toil,
And noxious reptiles crawled along the soil.—

Oh! was it not a pitying breeze of heaven,
That to the Sufferer's pale, parched lip was given?
—Again, more fresh and keen, that breeze doth blow—
Reviving by its pure and sudden glow,
The fainting nerve of life—she felt it play,
As o'er her mantling cheek, it loved to stray—
Oh! might she feel its freshening force unbind
The deadly, freezing fetters of her mind!—
And now—she lists the harshly-moaning storm—
And now—upon her bending, fragile form,
Beats the cold rain—a bitter, deep-drawn sigh,
The offspring of subdued anxiety—
The first that Carlos heard, had gradual heaved
That breast, of every thought and care bereaved,

Save, that in yonder loathsome steep, her life
Had not been yielded to the murderer's knife.—

The splash of waters, low salutes her ear,
And murmuring tells the mountain-river near.— 520
—Timid and shrill arose the signal horn—
An answering blast along the shore was borne—
And, as they pause, in whisper deep and low,
Carlos held converse with her stranger-foe,
From whom, a broken word at times she caught,
With meaning dread, and weighty import fraught:
« Urge not—trust *him* my lord, for none may dare,
But him—the Monk—absolve me from my share »—
« Be it so, friend »—the Prince aloud replied:
And as he spoke, quick rising with the tide,
The regulated beat of Boatman's oar,
Close, and more closely sounded to the shore:
Round Rosaline's waist, his nervous grasp he threw,
And onward to the skiff, in silence drew.—

The wind howls fierce on Guadalquivir's side,
And slow the wherry stems its billowy tide;
'Neath the huge crag it plies its fearful way,
Now soaring high, borne on the white-foamed spray,
Now, buried with the falling wave 'tis lost—
Sport of the mountain-storm in fury tost.— 540
An instant on the marge Don Carlos stood,
And viewed the struggling skiff, the raging flood—
And as he strained his eager gaze to mark
Its flickering light, athwart the sable dark,
Now rise, now fall—then first a secret thought,
Direful as secret, on his soul was wrought:
I may not guess—and yet—perchance he smiled
To see it ride so brave the billows wild:
Perchance—he felt the friendly wave might seal
The living lip, that could a deed reveal—
He felt, that hidden in the watery deep,
Terror—revenge—remorse itself might sleep.—
Short-sighted Mortal!—dost thou think no Power,
Save blindest Chance, directs this fateful hour?—

Slowly the Bravo raised that light, fair form—
Half veiled—yet senseless to the beating storm;
It spoke not, moved not, seemed no living thing,
But as he leapt to shore, the harsh winds fling,
From off its brow, the flimsy shade—and 'neath
Was seen a lip of rose, unprest by Death;
A damask cheek, that had not felt his finger,
Or ah! how soft and full, its beauties linger!— 600
No languid paleness there—they said she smiled
Sweet as a Seraph—yet—most strangely wild—
Then too was seen the hand, that circling round,
The blue-veined temple, and the eye-lid bound.—

They watched him, as he climbed the rock, where stood
That monkish figure in his gown and hood;
The red-cloth cross, and girding rope before,
Proved that Saint Dominick's stern rule he bore;
But mantled close, no curious eye could trace
A line of the mysterious Father's face.—
With outstretched arms, upon the caverned marge,
He waits in silence, his devoted Charge.—

It seemed a bright-winged, fallen Cherub there,
In the arch-Demon's grasp—as meek—as fair.—
But as they gazed to mark what next should come,
The Friar and Maid were gone—in secret tomb,
Or cave—they knew not where—both seemed to sink,
Each hardy breast how'e'er unused to shrink,
Recoiled and shuddered now—in deep suspense,
They wait and list, with eagerness intense.— 620
Then, in low whisper—“Comrade, didst not hear,
As the wind stilled, a sound of pain and fear?”—
Methought 'twas such as dying mortals give,
When with the shriek, on earth they cease to live.”—
“Hush thee, Giralmo!—our unbidden eye
May not into these holy terrors pry.—
Some crime perchance, lies heavy on the head
Of this young Novice—vows and convent fled,
She comes to expiate—her Guard doth seem
Such as the Church employs—I heard no scream—
’Twas fancy all—see, o’er yon ridge he’s bent,
And seems to listen with an ear intent.”—

' Bernard—I swear thee by the sacred Rood,
Yon armed, dark Stranger is a man of blood—
The muffled Monk too—ay, some deed of ill,
Is done in that lone cave—yet, stay thee still—
Thou mayst have guessed—hold!—blinded are mine eyes,
On o'er yon pointed ridge an arm doth rise! »—

He saw full plain—the Father's withered hand
Was raised above the ridge's rocky band,— 640
And somewhat glittering bore—the which it gave,
Most slow and careful to the watching Slave—
No word was said—the arm withdrawn, in haste
The Stranger to the waiting wherry past.—

And then he told a tale of how,
That Maid did break the sister-vow;
'And yielded to that cave, must there
To meet her awful doom, prepare;
And then he took a purse of gold,
And gave it to the Boatman's hold;

And from a flask such magic drew,
As well the wily Bravo knew
Would lull suspicious fear to rest,
And set at ease each doubting breast.—
—All, at the rising morn, did seem
A flitting and fantastic dream.

END OF THIRD CANTO.

ALCON MALANZORE.

CANTO FOURTH.

IRON-HANDID Goddess!—chill Adversity!—

Thou, whom the mortal race abhor and dread;
From whose stern lash, they vainly seek to fly,

Or 'scape the snare, thy toiling fingers spread!—
Oh! thou dost laugh to scorn each petty guile,

The struggling Victim plies to burst his chain—
On Freedom's verge, thou bidst him sport awhile,

Then back re-plunged, he is thy Slave again!—
Ah! that pale Languor o'er thy breast might creep—
A moment loose thy hold, and veil thine eye in sleep!—

'Tis said, that 'neath thy rod will Virtue groan,
 Shroud her fair splendour, bow her lofty mien—
 And humbled to the dust, despised, alone,
 No longer be, what still she boasts to have been.—
 'Tis said, transplanted to thy freezing soil,
 Genius' bright-opening bud will droop and wither—
 Nipt by thy luckless grasp, no care, no toil,
 Can warm to life, the germ that's wasted thither.—
 'Tis said, to thee each power, each will resigned,
 The soul resistless sinks, her grovelling doom to find.— 20

Frown not dread Power, altho' thy mighty fane
 Should thus be slandered by reproach most vile
 The hand of Truth will brush away the stain,
 And sage Experience blazon forth the wile!—
 Thou art the Nurse of Virtue—barsh indeed
 The tender Infant's hardened to the race!—
 Thou art the spring of genius—poor the meed,
 And slow the fame, that can that meed replace:
 Thou art the test of good—the probing steel,
 That can its truth, its nature, and its depth reveal.—

Thine are the joys, that from Religion flow—

More rapturous pure, than ought this world can yield:

Thine is the heart, that mourns another's woe,—

The fount of feeling by thy touch unsealed:

'The proudest glow that firm Affection feels—

The fortitude, that strong, unbending, high,

Man, in his native dignity reveals,

From thee derive their force and majesty.—

'The mask withdrawn—thou art an Angel given

To wean from this low earth, and make us meet for heaven, 40

Fair Seville's glittering domes, the morning beam
Had lighted with a faint and yellow gleam;

'The pallid Aysan had left his bed,

To ply his toil, and earn his scanty bread;

But o'er the draped windows of the Great,

It stole unheeded by— in feast of state,

And gorgeous revel, had the passing night

Ontvied the brilliancy of morning light.—

For three long days was held the costly feat

The princely Victor of the Moors to greet.—

With open arms did Spain receive her Son,
Whose favored hand, the mighty deed had done,
That from her wild and desolated shore,
Would sweep the bloody traces of the Moor.—
Wooed by the Fair, respected by the Brave,
Loaded with all, that Vanity could crave,
Don Carlos was the only mortal there,
That bore a brow of gloom, a heart of care.—
Oft from the sport and dance he turned aside,
As tho' some sudden pang he strove to hide; 60
Oft as he pressed the hand, and met the rays
Of some kind Beauty's dark, voluptuous gaze,
He'd start as from a serpent—to his eye,
Would rise a form of seraph purity;
And often as he told the well-feigned tale
Of that loved Sister's fate—his lip grew pale,
And more of sorrow did his looks reveal,
Than many thought his breast was formed to feel.—
But, let it pass—these pangs will soon be o'er—
—The cause sleeps safe on Guadalquiver's shore.—

Away ye gaudy joys, that strive in vain
To crush the worn of care!—'twill rise again,
And dart yet fiercer venom through the soul,
When drugged to rest by Pleasure's rose-twined bowl—
I leave ye here, to seek the lone, dark cell,
Where Pain unmasked, and Crime unblushing dwell.—
Beneath yon northern tower, without the bound
Of this gay city—'merged i' the vaulted ground,
Are ranged the secret prisons meet for those,
'Gainst whom the eye and hand of Justice close.— 80
Through these low passages nought greets the ear,
Save now and then, a rustling footstep near,
That glides unseen away—a distant light
Will sometimes flash athwart the eager sight—
Perchance a clanking chain, a piercing shriek,
May draw the crimson from the listener's cheek.—
But, pass we on—not these demand our care—
A nobler Victim breathes this baneful air.—
Mark you tall figure, with his lamp and key—
He seeks a distant den of infamy—

One massive door is passed—another now
Grates on its rusty hinge, and creaking slow,
Unfolds a wide, dark dungeon to the view,
That ne'er the breath or light of morning knew—
—Nay, start not—nor thy shrinking eye withdraw—
For stretched upon that bed of scanty straw—
Half-naked—chained—with locks of matted gore—
Lies the far-famed—the mighty Malanzore!—

Dark Hero! I lament, but pity not,
Thy fallen state—thy hard and fearful lot. 106
Pity thou art above—her soft pangs sleep,
Her melancholy eye forgets to weep,
When dazzled by the broad, resplendent blaze
Of greatness in its wane—whose setting rays
Have more of majesty, than when on high,
They glaze unveiled to every vulgar eye.—
Wondering we pause—no milder thought can steal—
And awe and reverence are all we feel.—

The silent shades of night beheld alone,
His entrance here—to Carlos best is known,
Wherefore disclaiming the victorious right,
He hid his Victim from Iberia's sight;
Nor bade the savage pomp of triumph rise,
To mark his grandeur in a Nation's eyes.—
Unseen, save by his Guard, who night and day,
Watched him with Argus care, the Chieftain lay.—
His Guard?—that form and feature not unknown,
The Guadalquiver Boatmen well might own.—

Slow on the earth, he placed the portioned food—
—His look some lurking mischief seemed to brood, 120
As glancing from the hard, coarse meal, his eye
Fell beneath Alcon's calm severity—
Who drew aside the uninviting fare,
And back relapsed to thought of gloom and care.—

Not e'en the Muse can pierce that darksome soul—
For seldom from its deep recesses stole

'A look or glance, that to the watchful eye,
Revealed the brooding thoughts, that inward lie.—
How' e'er it be, this still and silent mood
Seems to portend some hope of coming good—
Schemes of revenge and liberty retain,
—Shadows or not—the power to soothe that brain—
His brow indeed is marked by pain and care,
Yet owns it not a semblance of despair.—
Long would he muse—then as proud hope was given,
Would shake his fettered hand, and lift his eye to heaven

Roused from that trance, what step salutes his ear?
What martial figure slow approaches near?
The glittering band that clasped around his waist,
The snowy plumes, his sable hat that graced. 140
The flowing mantle, and the step of pride,
Illustrious rank, and haughty power decide.—
Alcon half raised him from his prison-bed,
And on his firm-closed hand, sustained his head:
No sign of courtesy did either make.—
And thus with folded arms Don Carlos spake:

« I seek not, Moor, thy prison's silent gloom,
To vaunt my prowess, or insult thy doom—
Yet less, compassion's bitter balm to pour
From hands, fresh reeking with thy country's gore—
For other care demands my presence here—
A care more sacred, from a cause too dear.—
Not as thy Conqueror, but thy Peer, I claim
Unsullied back a Sister's virgin fame,—
The honor of my country and my race—
The altar of my God from foul disgrace!—
—Say Infidel! hast thou presumed to stain,
With thy unhallowed rites our Church's fane?—
Or forced, polluting Savage! to thine arms,
Thy royal Captives consecrated charms?— 160
Or by some potent spell, disarmed the pride,
That scorned thy passion, and thy power defied?—
—Nay, check thy rage—it doth become thee *now*,
To curl thy lip, and bend thy swarthy brow —

I thank thee, Spaniard—those last words recall
The soul of Alcon, rising with the fall,

Upon the wreck of fortune—thine doth sink,
Degraded by thy greatness, to the brink
Of pride most vain and base—dazzled, elate,
It views with reeling eye, its towering height.—
Thou call'st me Savage, Infidel, to load
With vile reproach of sin to Man, and God—
Away! away!—t'were loftier tongues than thine,
That 'ere could dart a pang to souls like mine.—
Enough to know—by every sacred tie—
If there be faith on earth, or hope on high,
The Maid is mine—her free and virgin hand,
The contract sealed, and linked the sacred band—
—I loved—most fondly and too weakly loved—
And many a bitter pang my passion proved— 180
I los—ay, all for her—and would again—
Except to know I did not love in vain.—
In life, in death, she's mine—but here I swear,
(Mark me, young Prince)—that should your tribunes dare,
Of her pure blood, one single drop to shed,
Or lop one wreathing ringlet from her head—

Spain trembles to her centre—her last groan,
Her very life-blood, shall that crime atone.—
I've said it—Alcon never spoke in vain—
Beware—and to your courtiers turn again!—

He ceased, and cold, contemptuous, fixed his look
On Carlos' sinking eye—whose bosom shook,
With shame, revenge, and rage—he felt how low,
To savage Virtue, polished Vice may bow—
He shrunk beneath the Infidel's firm eye,
And half believed his fearful prophecy.—
But starting from that mood, he marked again,
The Warrior writhing 'neath the Captive's chain—
And yielded to his mercy—lost—alone,
With every friend, and hope, and succour flown :—
'The tamest beast ensnared, will chafe and roar—
A few short hours—and Alcon boasts no more—
Glut thee Revenge!—arm Death with every sting!—
And o'er his couch, thy keenest horrors fling!—

His lip distends with exultation dire—
His eye balls flash with dark, malignant fire :
« Ha ! »—he exclaimed—« and dost thou dare me then !—
And wouldst thou rouse the tiger in his den !—
Look here thou lofty Moor !—perchance *this* sight
May stay thy spirit, in its soaring flight. »—
He said, and from a glittering casket drew
A dagger bathed in gore—its meaning flew
Instant and chill to Alcon's bursting heart,
« She's gone ! »—he cried, with wild convulsive start :
—« It is too much »—and sinking to the ground,
On its cold breast a transient calmness found.—

Carlos laughed loud—« Go—seek her in the grave !—
In life, in death' she's thine—the mountain wave
Rolls o'er the sandy sod, where coldly fade
The glowing charms thou lovst—dim, frozen, dead.— 270
Go there, and seek her icy arms, and rest
Thy head upon her chilled and deep-gored breast !
It warms for thee no more—nor can thy breath
Sully the loveliness defaced by Death.—

The blood thou sayst so pure, this dagger dyes—
Pierced to the heart she fell—her last-drawn sighs
Were mixed with prayers for thee—and Alcon's name
Closed her pale lips, in unrepentant shame ».—

« Hold! Monster hold!—accursed fratricide!—
—Deep shalt thou feel the pangs, thou darst deride—
Thy blood—the tears and blood of thousands slain,
Shall wash that poniard from its crimson stain!
Well shall your Matrons, and lone Virgins rue
The hour, that from my Rosaline's bosom drew
The life, I doated on—dear Maid, farewell!—
—This weakness is my last—all welcome Hell!—
Welcome ye horrors—Vengeance, Hatred, Death!
More precious now by far, than vital breath—
Steel my firm soul, and aim my desperate hand—
Teach it to plunge the unrelenting brand! 240
Shut up each path to pity, fear, remorse!
Nerve me, Despair, with more than mortal force!—

—Yes—I'll avenge thee, Maid!—and then will come
To share thy cold and gore-polluted tomb—
We meet in heaven or hell—no matter where,
So thou my Wife, my Rosaline, art there!—
Away thou Reptile!—send thy minion here—
Double your Guards—and watch me far and near—
I scorn both them and thee—avaunt I say! »—
Carlos amazed, half-feared, half-wished to stay—
Perchance the Maniac might burst through his chain,
And crush him in his huge, herculean strain:
Somewhat like dread he felt—and half-looked round
As tho' expecting from the yielding ground,
A lurking foe might spring—no more delay—
In scorn he smiled, but silent stole away.—

From Alcon's stubborn heart, one piercing groan
Burst forth to nature due—and dashing down,
With naked breast on the damp soil he lay
Fixed, motionless—while in the yielding clay, 260

His sinewy arms, that o'er his head were thrown,
Indented their broad shape—hope, fear were flown—
Hope for himself, and fear for her—with thought
Painful, intense, his laboring mind seemed fraught—
Nought marked or heard he—all was blank and gone—
With thousands round, he would have felt alone.—

• My Son—what inward passion rends thy soul?—
Must it be said that failing Fortune stole
That, which her strong temptations had withstood
By them uncloyed, undazzled, unsubdued?
Oh! mighty Warrior! from this abject state,
Raise thee, superior to the storms of Fate!
Help, hope, and friends are nigh—and from this wall,
Thou shalt be free, ere morrow's beam doth fall! »—

Amazed, the Chieftain started from the ground,
Far as his chains would reach—and gazing round,
Beheld a form majestic and benign,
Bend o'er his couch—whose features marked and fine,

Softened by age, with pensive sternness still,
Betrayed the high resolve, and daring will; 280
A monkish robe this strange Intruder wore,
And in his hand, the Holy Cross he bore.—
Erect and tall—his deep-lined forehead shown,
As back the friar-hood was careless thrown.—

“ Who art thou, that with words so strange, invade
My startled ear—and pierce this dungeon-shade,
Unseen, unheard? I know thee not—yet stay,
Thy look, thy mien, more than thy words can say.—
Thou comst not to insult, nor yet to snare
My easy trust—of that, old Man, beware!—
Nor think me abject sunk—my soul is rent,
Yet nerved anew, its force is raised not bent.—
Say who thou art—from whence, and wherefore here,
Thou comst to do for me, this deed of fear! »—

“ I was a Warrior once, and Fame will own
The name of Mendez not to her unknown.—

I loved a moorish Maid—a form more bright,
A mind more pure, ne'er blest these shades of night—
In days of rapine, lured-by face so fair,
A Christian band of fiends accursed, did tear 300
From the chaste Maid, bereft of all defence,
Her virgin fame, her spotless innocence.—
She sought and found me—at my feet she fell—
In anguish owned her shame—those accents dwell
E'en now upon mine ear—each pang, each smart,
Can writhe e'en now, this almost callous heart.—
Drawing a poniard from her circling vest :
« Take it »—she cried—« and from this tainted breast,
In mercy pour the life to horror given!
Oh! yield me peace, and bear me to thy heaven!—
There may we meet and love ».—I answered nought—
Prest her warm check, and with dire firmness fraught,
Plunged to the hilt the fatal steel she gave,
And unrelenting sent her to her grave.—
I swore, as from her noble breast it came,
On each base Christian to avenge her shame—

To sheath my sword against the invading Moor,
And aid the cause I had condemned before.—

“Bred up in camps, I little cared or knew,
From whence our Priests their pious rhetoric drew; 320
The Moors their Prophet had, and we had ours,
Gifted by each with pure and godlike powers;
But now, a Christian harrowed up my soul,
I spurned indignant at the church-control;
Beheld with bitter scorn, and feelings pained,
The gaudy follies, and the rites that stained
Her shrine however sacred—her high name,
All who professed, seemed born for sin and shame.
I took the habit of a Monk—and strove,
In that disguise, with deeds of mercy, love,
To smoothe the rugged toil, the path of woe,
That many a hapless being is marked to go.—
Death have I warded off—and hid, unknown,
Baffled the schemes I feigned to help, and own.—
But most unto thy Moors, my aid I’ve lent,
Imprisoned, chained, with sickness, sorrow bent;

And now to thee, their far-famed Chief I hold
My saving hand—trust it—tis firm, tho' bold!—
I reverence thy name—I love thy virtue high,
That stoops not to o'ercome its enemy— 340
I prove it, when I pledge myself to thee,
And burst thy bonds, and bid thee to be free.—
—Nay, wonder not, that I should draw again
Thine arm and vengeance on the head of Spain :
I loathe my country—hate her people, laws,—
Have sworn myself against her, and her cause ;
Murder and Rapine stalk throughout the land—
Vice and her minions stamp it with their brand ;
All is pollution—and thy wrongs, thy woe,
Thy Rosaliné's blood, each warring doubt o'er throw.—
—Say, wilt thou trust me Chief?—'tis in thy hand—
Speak—Freedom will obey my known command! »—

« I trust thee—ay—resign myself to thee—
Unfold thy plans, and bid me to be free! »—

« 'Tis well—thou know'st there is a faithful band,
That burn to raise for thee, their guardian brand—

And more I tell thee, their neglected power,
Strengthens and rises each succeeding hour;
The northern mountains are their lurking place—
From whose high range, these towers they love to trace, 360
Eager to seize this 'vantage time they stand,
To loose thee, from captivity's base band.—
Trust me thy Guard—I'll drug his posset deep,
And close his watchful eye, in fast-bound sleep,
And at the midnight hour, when Darkness lades
This self-doomed city with her sable shades,
And all is silent here—thou wilt behold,
Break from the ground, a Page in green and gold,
From off thy limbs, their galling chains he'll take—
Nought speak or ask—no answer will he make—
But follow where he leads—Now all is known,
Save that thy food is poisoned—that, here thrown,
Beneath these boughs, will all suspicion ward,
And lull to peace, thy ever-dangerous Guard—
—God speed thee Moor! for yonder deep-toned chime
Warns me of middle-day—its pregnant time,

We may not lose in words. —and bending low,
Departing moved, with measured pace and slow.—

Vainly the Chief would bar his steps, to pour
The flowings of his thankful heart—no more 380
Would Father Anselm list or stay—when gone,
And he had turned him to his thoughts alone,
He felt the thirst of freedom all but fled,
Unshured by her—his Rosaline cold and dead—
Oft he groaned forth her name—hung on the sound,
’Till the deep echo swelled with ‘Rosaline’ round—
Then starting up, he bit his lip from shame,
And strove each strong emotion to reclaim;
And thought of vengeance, and degraded Spain—
Those very thoughts but added to his pain:
Insult and bonds, disgrace itself seemed low,
To all he dreaded, all he suffered now.—

Ye, who have haply never known
What tis to love, save only one,

To wrap your soul in theirs—to feel
The joys such love alone can steal,
Whose very pangs are dear—ye know
The wild despair, the silent woe,
The deep and settled grief that come,
When Death reveals the hungry tomb, 400
And calls that other-self away,
And 'minds thee, that thou too art clay.—
Yet weep not Mortal! look on high
Gaze on yon brightly azure sky,
And ask thyself who waits thee there—
The form thou lovest, more pure, more fair,
Than ever on this earth it shone;
Yet a short while, thou too art gone,
To where thy godlike birth was given,
Which clothed in dust a Son of Heaven!—
For dust thou art, but Spirit too
From thine Almighty Parent drew—
His offspring—then rash Man, beware!
Nor shame thine origin, nor dare

To call that wretched, mean, accurst,
Beneath the trodden worm—that first,
And last, His parted essence bears,
His equal love parental shares.—
E'en erring 'gainst his righteous plan,
Thou art not less—than fallen Man.—

420

Solace like this, do many boast,
But there are some, to whom 'tis lost;
The noble Moor beheld it not;
Confused and dreadful was the lot,
Beyond this life apportioned—here,
He shrank in pain—tho' not in fear;—
And no relief, no hope, no light,
Broke on the deep, eternal night.—
Vengeance—and then to seek the grave,
Washed by the lonely mountain-wave,
To fold in death the virgin charms,
That warm in life, had mocked his arms—

One kiss, one single kiss, imprest,
To sink with her to lasting rest.—
This was his wish—his only care,
—The gloomy offspring of Despair.—

The day wins on—and yellow-mantled Eve
Leads up her frolick hand, whose joys may leave
No sting behind—her's is that heavenly hour,
When Contemplation seeks her lonely bower— 410
With eye uplift, and swelling bosom fraught,
Raptured and raised by more than mortal thought.—
Hers is the hour, when Love delights to stray,
And Innocence, the partner of his way.—
Connubial bliss! thou sum of earthly good!
Oh! that thy temple here unsullied stood!
The Scoffer had not dared to blast thy shrine—
Or from thy mysteries awful, pure, divine,
To lift the shrouding veil—thee God ordained
Perfect, irreprehensible, unstained;
And nought of shame or guilt he mixed with thee—
For Angels love—and shall Man vaunt him free!—

—Soft at eve to wander where
Flowrets scent the balmy air !
Soft to list thy warbling lay,
Chantress of declining day !
Shaded in some wilding bower,
Idling o'er the lovely hour,
Where the blue sky smiling peeps ,
Where the merry lambkin leaps, 460
Where the silver current creeps ;
Rosy babes in glee disporting ,
Swains in verdant alleys courting ;
Setting sun, and waving wood—
All are fair, and all are good !—

Ah! must I leave ye, scenes so dear,
To turn once more to deeds of fear ?
Fain would I stay your sweets among,
And tune the soft, Arcadian song ;
'That Woman's gentler sense invites ,
And roves the paths, where she delights

In calm retirement's walk to hide—
Most fitting, happy, dignified.—
Yet far from me, the senseless gloom,
That gives mankind a living tomb!
To mingle in the circle gay,
Where Wit and Beauty flower the way;
Where Genius with his eye of fire,
And Grace and Decency inspire
Unchecked delight—is lawful joy, 480
Nor to be spurned as empty toy.—
But 'tis where Dissipation treads,
And round her sickly influence sheds,
When Woman from her duties weaned,
By Custom's shield securely screened;
Forgets the purport of her life,
And meets but misery and strife,
Where firm as rays to centre bend,
Peace, happiness, and nature tend—
Tis this the Poet's censures bind,
That mars the joy it hopes to find.—

Evening is gone—and coming night doth bring
The fate of Nations, on her dusky wing.—
Brooding beneath her shade, a deed is done,
That ere twice risen, shall the startled sun
Shrink from the sea of blood, that he perforce
Must beam upon in his celestial course.—
As conscious of her burthen, Darkness came,
(If such she could be called), in silver flame;
—The borrowing moon unveiled her brow on high, 500
And rode in full unclouded majesty;
While thousand, million stars emblazoned round,
With diamond lustre, heaven's blue-vaulted ground.—
With equal pace, and more than equal pride,
That soaring spirit rose—its weakness died—
All softer thoughts were gone—for mighty deed
Prepared he stood, and urged her lagging speed.—
With folded hand upon his forehead strained,
And eye upraised, the captive Chief remained;
And oft that ardent eye would downwards glance,
Impatient, as to mark some form advance;

While near his side extended, breathing deep,
His Guard was sunk in forced, unbroken sleep.—

Hark at that solemn chime—through vault and cell
Reverberating loud!—it is the bell,
That marks the midnight hour—he hailed the sound,
Half started up, and viewed the moist, still ground,
Breathless with expectation, hope, and dread—
—Somewhat he hears—some hollow, distant tread—
And now—'tis silence all—oh' who can tell 520
The horrors of suspense, itself a hell!—
Again—a hoarse, low rumbling from beneath,
Gave sign of coming liberty or death!—
It rises—bursts upon the ear—behold!
The earth heaves up a square of firm-hewn mould,
And from it springs the Page in green and gold!—

So light the figure was, that it might seem
A Fay, that dances in the moonlight beam;
That drinks the dew from each encumbered flower,
And seeks the blue-bell for its sleeping bower.—

The Spanish hat of velvet green, around,
With waving plume, his youthful temples bound;
His waist was circled by a dazzling zone,
And 'neath his knee the embroidered dress weighed down,
Heavy with fringe and gold;—and drawn full tight,
Each tapering limb was cased in silk of white;
A lamp—and sword he seemed to lift with pain,
Were borne by this young traitor-Son of Spain.—

At sight of Alcon he appeared to shrink,
And turned his eye away, and seemed to think 540
Such form half-naked, was no comely sight,
Swarthy and huge, for Page so fair and bright:
Or yet more likely he was struck with fear,
At first beholding this dread Warrior near;
For through the land, his very name in sooth,
Would draw the blood from cheek of listening Youth.—
But soon t'was past, and forward on his pace
He urged, with airy mien, replete in grace.—

Alcon half viewed him with mistrust, amaze,
As something strange that mocked his piercing gaze;
But neither spoke—the Page without delay,
With eager, trembling hand, soon eased the sway
Of those base chains, and cast them proud away;
Then from his couch of straw, the Moor upreared
His form terrific—arms and ancles scared
By those accursed bonds—with glaring eye,
And aspect fierce, he greets thee Liberty!—
E'en as the lion bursting from the snare,
Shakes his proud mane, and scents the forest air,
And urged by rage and hunger tracks the way, 560
Eager to seize on Man, his foe and prey:
So rose that Chief—and shook his gleaming blade:
« God of the battle! I invoke thy aid,
For justice, vengeance, Rosaline! »—he said—
And darted to the opened earth, and sprung,
With instant swiftness down the steps that clung
Half-mouldered to their bed—the Boy pursued,
With breathless toil, this pace so new and rude.—

Along a darksome vault, and through a door
Of massy strength, their eager course they bore:
Another now firm-barred, impedes their way,
Which, their united force, with grating sway,
Soon turns upon its hinge;—Alcon had passed,
When lo! as heedlessly its fold he grasped,
Some unseen hand within, back strongly drew,
And jarred it close to his astonished view!—
Resistance faint he heard, but strove in vain
To force the fatal barrier wide again.—
The sound retreating warned him of his state,
With danger fraught—and striding from the gate, 580
Heavy at heart, pursued his groping way,
Till yet far distant he beheld a ray
Of moonlight beaming through the opened ground—
Thither he sped—and with one lofty bound,
Lit safely on the upper earth—and there,
Beyond all hope, with steeds in full prepare,
Stood Father Anselm!—arms and armour lay
Ready at hand, piled up in fair array:—

« Welcome most noble Moor! »—the Father cried—
—But—where the Page?—thy young and faithful Guide?—
Few words sufficed reply to that demand,
The mischief worked by some dark hidden hand :
The old Man groaned—and to his eye a tear
Sprung as he sighed—« The hand of Heaven is here!—
Haste, Warrior haste!—each fleeting moment draws
Death to thyself, destruction to thy cause! »—
Scarce had he spoken, ere with steely fold,
Circling the limbs, in manly beauty's mould,
Most perfect formed—the massive armour shone ;
He girt his belt, buckled his helmet on , 600
And muffled in a cloak, with lightsome speed,
Spurned back the earth, and vaulted on his steed ;
That, conscious of his weight, pranced high in air,
'And scarce brooked curb, till with more prudent care,
The Father mounted too—who iron wore,
Concealed beneath the hood and gown he bore.—
Then on , as arrows from the bow, they sped,
And yielded to the winds pursuit and dread.—

Meanwhile of that fair Page, the wondrous fate,
I bid thee melancholy Muse relate!

Why dost thou fold thy hands, and bend thine eye,
And o'er thy pausing lyre thus droop and sigh?—
I bid thee, melancholy Muse! relate,
Of that fair Boy, the yet mysterious fate!—

Spain's stern tribunal in these prisons sate,
At midnight hour, to do its work of fate:
And now 'tis ministering of life or death,
At will and pleasure, in yon vault beneath—
Thither they tend—and that poor Page must there,
To meet its tortures, and his doom prepare.— 620
Eager and fierce the minion urged his way,
Unmindful of his trembling, suppliant prey—
They gain the first dark gate—on each side stood
The wakeful Guardians of this den of blood—
With curious eye, they ope the fatal door,
From whence a culprit seldom issues more.—
A lofty spacious hall was next beheld,
Where Monks and Soldiers mixed—and silence dwelled—

Tho' custom had worn off the edge of fear,
Yet awful expectation settled here;
And 'gainst the law it was of this dread tomb,
To speak or e'en to whisper in that room;
Some count their beads, and some on tiptoe creep,
'And some—but very few they were—could sleep:
From whence through vaulted arches dark and low,
They pass unquestioned—till unfolding slow,
Appears that tribune dread:—the glaring hue
Of half-closed lamps, that from the Judges threw,
As if in shame, their constant, quivering light,
On the pale Victim, racks and Guards gleamed bright.—6.40
With firmer step the Page advanced than e'er
Could seem to suit his weak and boyish fear,—
His Guard due honor first, submissive paid,
Then in a hasty tone, yet reverent said:
« Most awful Sires!—I may not now tell more,
Than that the captive Chieftain Malanzore
Is fled. » —Up rose the Judges, Monks and all,
Dismay, confusion scared the sacred hall:

« Send forth the Guards!—on every side—away!
And he, who dead or living, wins the prey,
Shall boast a nation's thanks! »—the caverns pour
Their hundreds to pursue the flying Moor:
Haste thee, O Alcon! for thou well hast need
To plunge the rowels in thy fiery steed!—

Their seats the Inquisitors resume to hear
What more on this high matter should appear;
And thus their creature spoke—all duly said
Of titles first, and farther reverence paid:
« As from a distant cell I bent my way,
To where the upper vaults in branches stray, 660
A light flashed far—I watched, and plainly there
Viewed a dark figure, tall and huge, and bare,
Save that from his waist a white fold flung,
Girdled his loins and 'bove his knee was slung:
Methought such limbs, such mien could ne'er belong
To any of the Moorish vulgar throng;
Their prisoned Chief alone it e'en must be,
Breaking his bonds, and struggling to be free.—

Following whose steps, I marked this Traitor here,
Aiding, assisting, in the base career.—
I ventured not to brave the Moor I own,
And few there are methinks would face alone
That Man of fear—but I resolved to stay
The young, the vile companion of his way;
And by another path, I gained a door
Which they perforce must pass—the unwary Moor
First entered—from whose grasp, with jarring din,
I closed the Warrior out, the Page within;
Whom here I brought to meet his waiting tomb—
—For Traitor foul too honorable doom. »— 680
He ceased, and to the earth thrice bent him low,
And drew aside with backward step and slow.—

Now in the midst, alone, with covered head,
Stood that proud Youth—remorse and fear were fled.—
Unchanged his cheek, and scornful flashed his eye,
While his soft form rose near to majesty.—
Short was the pause—when from the shrouded throne,
A voice was heard in stern, unvarying tone :

" Devoted Youth!—fixed is thy self-drawn fate—
 Pardon is not for thee—too heinous great
 Is that foul crime, for which thou standest here,
 Bereft alike it seems of shame and fear.—
 Foe to thy God, thy country—and to those
 From whom thy being—oh! most accursed!—flows—
 'Traitor and renegade'—not life alone,
 But pangs and tortures must in part atone
 The fearful guilt, the deep oppressive load,
 That sinks thy 'blackened soul from heaven and God.—
 And more—beneath an injured Nation's eye,
 For dread example shall thy body die; 700
 And torn from thence, the soul will wing her way
 To lasting fire, shut out from hope and day.—
 Tell who thou art—if ought thou hast to plead,
 Say on—tho' nought can clear thee from the deed. »—

Unmoved and haughty still the Page stood there;
Nor bowed the knee, nor from his forehead fair,
Raised off its plumed shade—but thus he spoke—
—In silver melody the accents broke.—

« Methinks there are some here, who well might own
This form, these features to their memory known;
Perchance too somewhat of my piteous tale,
Which Mercy will not weep and dare not veil—
Has moved their scorn—or waked their sympathy—
—Abbot of famed Saint John, I call on thee
To testify my word! »—graceful and slow,
Descends the plumage from that brow of snow;
Down in profusion to his waist were thrown
Rich clustered, waving locks of darkest brown;
He paused, with stedfast eye, but flushing cheek,
And twice essayed, and twice in vain to speak; 720
At length—with step advanced, and rising mien:—
—« Am I not the Infanta Rosaline? »—

Horror had chained the reverend Abbot's tongue,
Since from her brow its dark disguise she flung.—
That look—it was enough—and strange that e'er,
He, who e'en once had heard those accents dear,
So soft, melodious, kind—should fail to own
However masked, that face, that form, that tone!—

Oh! had she breathed one sigh, or envious light
Had beamed one ray upon her eyes more bright—
Tho' dead to him, aside had Alcon torn
The shading veil, with art too fatal worn,—

Murmur of awe, astonishment, and dread,
From Judge to Guard through this foul region spread—
Then, hushed to silence, all in varying mood,
To mark what followed next expectant stood.—
The Fathers spoke awhile in whisper low—
Then one by one descended, grave and slow;—
And at their head by those mild features known,
Trembling approached the abbot of Saint John : 740
(Whose harsher Brethren viewed with scorn and dread,
And eye of zealous hate the royal Maid)—
Bending his venerable form, he said :
“ The hand of Justice is unerring here,—
She boasts no mercy—and she knows no fear—
Nor Youth, nor Rank, nor Virtue's self can shade
The glare of guilt—or veil the Culprit's head.—

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Guarded 't' thin these walls, must thou await
The judgement that unfolds—resolves thy fate.—
A Tribune more august, thy titles claim—
—Soon may it prove thee free from spot and blame!—
The accents faltered—o'er his brow he drew
The mantle that concealed his grief from view.—

Ought but this—scorn, abhorrence, pain and fear
Could Rosaline meet—ought but this old Man's tear—
That flush was gone, and light'ning from her eye,
No longer spoke terrific energy;
Wan, colourless—with downcast eyes she stood,
In pride disarmed, and lost and suffering mood—
Then, on her lip, his withered hand she laid: 760
“ Oh! Father—pray for me! ”—in anguish said—
And bowing to her Guards—“ I am prepared—
Lead—lead me hence—while reason yet is spared! ”

END OF FOURTH CANTO.

ALCON MALANZORE.

CANTO FIFTH.

AVAUNT, lean pallid Spectre!—whence art thou?—
What grave has back regorged thee here on earth,
To scare with threatening arm, and fleshless brow,
Pleasure's fair votaries, and the sons of mirth?—
—Away!—and to thy Stygian shades from hence,
Betake thee, Sprite of fear!—abhorred of all!—
That look would freeze the soul of Innocence,
And Faith herself would tremble at thy call.—
Why dost thou hither steer thy trackless way,
And bend o'er yon fair towers, as tho' fore-doomed thy prey?—

Oh! now I know thee—by thine iron crown,
And by the dart, that trembles in thy hold—
I know thee by that unrelenting frown,
And by that ghastly look, so icy cold!—
Thy name is Death!—and like a vulture here,
Thou hoverest, lured by distant scent of food;
Ay stay! and thou shalt wallow in thy cheer,
And glut thee with a sacrifice of blood!—
Yet ah! most dreaded King!—wilt thou not spare
Some favored, sacred few—the good, the brave, the fair?—20

What cloud mysterious hangs o'er Seville's head?—
And whence this chilling gloom, that sudden spread,
Sweeps her gay revels, with a touch so rude,
And turns her crowding paths to solitude?—
With mien of import, stately Dons parade,
And Citizens, beneath, their portal-shade,
In whispering groupes collect—strange rumours round,
Float wild and fearful—yet no firmness found,
Or shape consistent—wrapt in darkness drear,
(T'was all they knew), some fatal change is near.—

Or whence the cause, that in their regions dread,
Tho' morn and mid-day hours so long have sped,
Detains the high Inquisitors?—and why,
Hurrying from every side, armed Horsemen fly,
With sealed scroll, which they, on pain of death,
Dare not unfold 'till o'er yon distant heath?—
The gates are closed—and none, save those who bear,
The Church's signet, may have egress there;
And ere morn broke, tis said on message high,
Couriers had sought Iberia's Majesty; 40
Don Carlos and the loftiest Nobles sate,
Mixed with that solemn court in close debate.—

Some say, the Moor long since had burst his chain,
And now, on this doomed city turns again,
Nerved by revenge and hate—some (wandering far),
Maintain that never did the chance of war,
Lead him a Captive—but that some Unknown
Duped them, with fatal art they dread to own.—
And now and then, a bolder tongue may dare
To mingle with its curse, a Maiden fair,

O'er whose mysterious fate, a darkening cloud,
Has dwelt to veil it from the vulgar crowd;
But scarce such words had passed—when listeners near,
With finger on their lip, would start in fear;
And warn with looks, that spirit rash and high,
That tampered thus with name of royalty.—
They, who to their Equal, bend in awe,
And fear *the Man*, and not the ruling law
In him residing, by a Nation's trust,
That can exalt, or bring him to the dust, 60
A part of which they form—can ne'er be free—
Slaves—slaves they are—and slaves were born to be.—

Night came apace, and in her thickest shroud,
Spreading the heaven, with one dull starless cloud—
But all was calm—the Spaniard sought his bed,
And as he listened to the Sentry's tread,
Or mused the watch-word that far-distant rose,
He breathed a prayer, and sunk to still repose.—

The fleeting step of Time more swift will bring
Those circling hours, that on their baneful wing,
Bear misery, pain, or death—at morning light,
We count with dreadful hope, the hours till night—
But oh! so swift they fly—that Nature seems
To league with Man, and mock our last fond dreams—
E'en as we view the evening shadows fall,
Our ear still soothed, will bend to Hope's soft call;
Imagination summons all her train,
And paints the scene, in colours bright and vain:—
Both may deceive—for both are false, wild, fair,
Yet are they not more lovely than Despair?— 80
Their joys are real, luscious, quickly o'er—
And what can earthly pleasure boast of more?—

Slow sank the sun into his ocean-bed,
Where crimsoned radiance veiled his falling head;
Long played the passing, parting beam upon
The domes of Seville—long and bright it shone—
It seemed as tho' the lingering light would stay,
To chase the Furies of the dark away;

As tho it warn'd the listless Mortals there,
It might not rise again so blest and fair.—
Thick sombre clouds in quick succession sailed,
And Night too soon the face of heaven had veiled;
Yet as it crept so lonely, cold, and still—
Flitting above the rugged northern hill—
One breast alone it struck with dread—as tho'
It came a sure yet unexpected foe :
For she had gazed upon those mountains wild,
Till by intensesness strained, her eye beguiled,
Viewed dazzling armour to the red beam glance,
And white-waved plumes, and many a glittering lance, 100
Slow winding o'er their lone and lofty brow,
Or starting in the leafy glades below.—
Soon vanished all—the fancied pageant gone—
All, save her prison dark—the night-bird's moan—
The heavy drops, that on the casement fell—
—A tale of horror to her heart they tell!—
It beat responsive to the hollow chime,
That marked the step of never-failing Time—

It thrilled in awe, at every distant tread,
That seemed the summons to her earthly bed.—

But now suspense is o'er—the hour is come—
Hark!—are not those the harbingers of doom?—
Their footsteps echo through yon marbled hall—
—How slow—how firm—how regular they fall!—
They pause—the chains unclasp—the hinges turn—
And by the pale and sickly flames that burn
In each raised hand—she views a sable train
Of hooded Monks—and veiled Sisters twain—
The aged Abbot of Saint John was there—
To him she gave that hand so pure, so fair, 120
And moved in silence on—and bowed her head,
And seemed as somewhat she would fain have said,
But on her lip it died—the guards await—
The yielding Sufferer follows to her fate.—

T'is come, that hour—too soon t'will pass away—
And with it fades the melancholy ray—

The pure, bright star, whose lonely lustre shed
 On darkness, light—revealed too much—and fled.—
 It strove to tell—(alas! and vainly strove),
 That guilt was in THE HATRED—not the love.—

In grand and solemn form assembled—sate
 The highest Rulers of the Church and state —
 The shade withdrawn—one dazzling blaze of light
 Revealed the lofty Judges to the sight;—
 Arrayed in robes of black, with hooded brows,
 On seats high ranged, a line of Churchmen rose;
 Beneath, the Peers their half-formed circle drew,
 Glittering in gems, and vests of crimson hue —
 Don Carlos, on the right, in plain attire,
 With darkened brow concealed, and brain on fire, 140
 On that deceiving Monk reflects too late—
 She lives—disgraced—the umpire of his fate!—
 But all is not yet lost—her words shall find
 No trust or credence from the biassed mind
 Of those stern Arbiters—not met to stem
 The accusing charge—not judge, but to condemn.—

The Partner of his guilt is well removed—
Secret and safe his negligence was proved—
And nought avails but with resentment high,
And well-feigned grief, to meet the injury.—
Opposed to him, a female figure sate,
That seemed to bend beneath the cumbrous weight
Of years and sorrow—down her furrowed cheek,
A silent tear in eloquence would speak—
Her form is changed, her brow more worn by care,
Yet is it not St. Mary's Abbess there?
Dragged from seclusion to the gory tomb
Of all on earth she loved—the fragrant bloom
Of coy, unfolding beauty—and the pride
Of maiden dignity—had drooped—had died— 160
Oh! had it *only* died!—immaculate,
Unstained, it were ennobled by its fate!—
No racks or Guards are here—but in their stead,
Object, alas! of more than equal dread,
A single block, with sable velvet hung,
From some—tho' few—a painful feeling wrung—

Upraised by steps, the fatal engine stood,
Awful and grand—prepared for royal blood—
And on its platform, half-concealed, were placed
Two strong, masked figures—naked to the waist—
Immoveable they stand—and ranged beneath,
Are plain beheld the instruments of death.—

T'was silence all—no sound might intervene
To break the solemn stillness of the scene
Each to himself retired—in pondering mood,
As o'er unnatural wonders seemed to brood,
So sudden, wild, and strange—but there were none,
That joyed to see this fatal eve—save one:
Rome's Nuncio hailed its inauspicious birth
A link in that dread chain, to which the Earth 180
Bowed a too willing neck—the wise, the brave,
Ensnared alike, its captive, and its slave.—
The blood of royalty it sought to seal
Its wanton power, and sanctify its zeal;—
The proud defenders of that blood, it won—
It taught, the Sire was greater than the Son—

That heaven-born Kings, to Heaven alone might bow,
And Rome contained its tribunal below.—
The haughty Noble mourned perchance the stain,—
He mourned—and worshipped the mysterious fane.—
Reason was lost—and what were stronger—Pride,
Had fled at Superstition's rapid stride.—

But hold!—the massive barriers slow unclosed—
And on their eye the lovely Culprit rose.—
The unrelenting Roman dared not brook,
Of suppliant Beauty, one resistless look—
Blindfold he judged—lest her triumphant ray
Might sweep the rights of Reason's throne away.—
But Error here, had drawn the bandage o'er
The eyes, that Sympathy had dewed before— 200
And closed the heart to Mercy's melting prayer,
That oft perchance her sacred woes might share.—

Surrounded by her Guards, with lofty staves,
And gleaming swords—a sea of steeled waves,

The gentle Captive stood—a sacred Maid,
Enveloped in her mantle's sable shade,
Tended her pausing step—and round them stood,
A row of Monks, with staff and deep-drawn hood.—
She entered—the revolving portals preste—
And save the attendant Nuns, debarred the rest.—

In simple, penitential garb arrayed,
Which neck, and arms, and ancles bare displayed,
As if a sympathizing net it drew,
To dazzle by their captivating hue;
With ringlets o'er that swelling bosom flowing,
And cheek in rich suffusion, deeply glowing,
And long-lashed eye, that trembling glanced around,
And naked foot, that scarcely prest the ground—
More beautiful, bewildering far thus seeming,
Than when in courts of pleasure fondly dreaming, 220
She caused each envious sigh, each ardent gaze,
In splendour robed, and all its lustrous blaze.—

Not the stern Judges, met to seal her doom—
The solemn pomp, the still and awful gloom—

Don Carlos' look—the sable block, that stood,
With Headsmen masked, prepared for deed of blood—
Could, with such bitter anguish fill her soul,
As that low groan, which from the Abbess stole.—
She gazed—and with a look so dark and wild,
The holy Mother scarce might know her Child—
So changed, so sad—the brow where erst was seen
The smile of innocence, as heaven serene—
Sullied by care—by passion's deadlier storm,—
Deep flashed the eye, and sullen rose the form—
Yet all in her so grand, that guilt appeared,
But virtuous pride, unstained, and self-revered.—

« The awful silence, Rome's high Nuncio broke,
As thus the royal Criminal he spoke :

« Princess of Spain!—the potent just command,
Of thy great Sovereign, and his subject land, 240
(To him entrusted by the law of Heaven,
Through Peter's pure, august Successor given)—

Calls thee before the Power assembled here,
To vindicate thine innocence—to clear,
As veiled and hallowed Maid—thy virgin fame,
Now stamped by deadly, foul, unnatural shame—
As Subject of these realms—thy loyal faith,
Stained by imputed Treason's baneful breath—
As Christian full professed—thy soul to God,
Sinking apostate to her last abode.—
From each, and all of these, thou must arise
Guiltless, unspotted, in Iberia's eyes;
Free'd by this ordeal, from the curse that's laid,
Ready to fall on thy devoted head :
Or—to fulfil thy country's equal laws,
To 'stablish firm Religion's sacred cause,
To blot away thy crime's dark, lasting trace,
From Christian Spain, and from thy royal race—
Thou must be doomed to death—and not a tear
From Mercy's eye, will consecrate thy bier.— 260

« Princess—dost thou affirm thy guilt—or claim
The test of proof to stamp thy crimes and shame?— »

The Nuncio ceased—once more in reverence low,
The conscious Culprit bowed her royal brow—
A moment paused—a moment strove to hide
The pangs of maiden fear, and princely pride—
Calm, soft, and slow, the melting accents fell—
How pure their source, needs nought save them to tell.—

• Dread Sires!—and mighty Seigniors!—met to doom,
'Mid the bright horrors of a pompous tomb—
And all the pageantry of sacrifice—
That loves to deck the victim 'ere it dies.—
Undazzled by this mockery of the grave—
Unawed by power—that is itself a Slave—
An undefended Criminal I stand—
Not to sue mercy from your sovereign hand—
Not to beseech for pardon or 'reprieve,
Nor to revile the sentence I receive :
But calm in conscious innocence—and free
From every taint of foul impiety,
I come—prejudged—by laws yon injured Heaven,
To curse our race, has ne'er in anger given—

With tears of blood it bade us live in peace—
It bade the jarring sound of discord cease—
Our common Parent veiled his mighty wrath,
And his own hand revealed the sacred path
Of purity and truth—he writ his law
Upon THE HEART—I reverence with awe,
That inward voice, which constant as the day,
Foretells the precipice, and warns away—
By it ye will be judged—the words of Men,
Errors of Nations, may avail not then.—
Nor is't the maudlin virtue of a mind,
To cold, minute perfection still resigned,
That bears the stamp, the seal of Heaven imprest,
Grand and immortal, on its Children's breast—
It is that nobler energy, that leads
Man to himself—the voice of Reason pleads—
'Truth, Conscience, Nature, seize their yielded right,
Disperse the mist—and rise revealed in light.— 300

« Behold my crime!—of human aid bereft,
No hope, no ray, of human mercy left—

Wherefore retrace the path—or weakly brood
O'er wrongs and woes to be redeemed with blood?—
My sex's dignity forbids to prove
The fatal wanderings of my early love—
The might of prejudice still unsubdued,
With shame, with grief, my fancied guilt 'I viewed,
And fled for refuge, to the sacred fane,
And there repented, wept, and prayed, in vain.—
Oh! if I sinned, 'twas Heaven itself arose,
To end the bitterness of forced repose—
To break the shield of adamant, that spread
Its powerful shadow o'er my guileless head—
And thrown again in that wild wilderness,
I thought no more of error and distress—
The film had vanished—I beheld the Moor—
And worshipped what I only loved before.—
A God on Earth—that more than mortal mind,
Unchangeable, unbending, unconfined— 320
Spurned the low dust, bequeathed to those, that crawl,
And wonder at his flight—and hope his fall.—

In one wide view, benevolent and wise,
All nature springs to his unclouded eyes—
He checks the ardors of that youthful strain,
Which scarce from human blood, their force refrain—
He sheathes the steel—and dares in his own breast,
To seek his guide, his judge, his hope, and rest.—

« It was enough—I feel, I own no crime,
In venerating virtue so sublime.—
Scarce worthy of so proud a fate—my hand
Was linked with his by Earth's most sacred band—
But o'er our nuptial hour, did Horror wave
The dark-stained banners of a destined grave—
And Fiends let loose upon that dreary night,
Savage with blood, seemed revelling in the fight—
Weakness once more, my softer soul subdued,
And still with awe the daring deed I viewed.»—

She paused—that night's stern crimes remembered well,
Stedfast and long, her eyes on Carlos dwell— 340

Vain strove the Fratricide to meet the rays,
That searched his soul, from that unwonted gaze—
The pallid brow, the quivering lip, confess
Remorse and dread, in all their bitterness—
Upon his sable mantle drooped his head—
Crime left its cowardice—the vigor fled.—
A death-like hue dyed deep the Captive's cheek
As with a voice yet firm, she strove to speak :

« I crave forgiveness—if this fragile frame,
The stronger movements of my mind reclaim!—
This mortal struggle soon will pass away—
Each lingering moment warns me of delay.
From his debasing chain, Spain's Scourge I freed—
Stamped as a Traitor, by that doubtful deed—
The Wife—the Patriot—bled at every pore—
I was a Woman—and released the Moor.—

« Now speak the doom, that never yearned to spare!—
Ye silent ministers of Death—prepare!—
The grave unclosing, chills not—moves not one,
On whom a ray of purer light hath shone—

Fearless and calm , my branded brow I lay
On the cold bosom of my parent clay—
There is more warmth of piteous feeling there,
Than 'ere these Offspring of its dust can share !—
Oh ! World adieu !—Rome raise thy lofty head !
A royal victim at thy feet has bled !—
Sovereign of Kings !—the sword of might will come
To cleave thy crest, and to avenge my tomb ! »

Deep sank the tones on every listening soul—
A passing moment Reason sought control—
With transient hope , the Abbess marked the pause ,
That seemed to doubt the mercy of their laws ;
But from his seat the artful Nuncio rose—
With dread , and hate unquelled , his bosom glows—
Each feature, tutored to its task, reveals
Nought of the bitterness that bosom feels.

« Thy form , O Innocence ! can Guilt assume !
Thus mock thy majesty—thus meet her doom !—
Can Crime step forth with this unblushing brow ,
And dare the vengeance Mercy stayed 'till now ! 380

Shame to thy christian birth!—thy kingly race!—
Thou fair pollution!—thou refined disgrace!—
My holy garb and mission, scarce may seal
The lip of scorn—the glow of injured zeal—
Yet ill doth it become them to revile
The suffering Culprit—dark how’er the guile—
Oh! rather from her closing view, our hand
Should raise the fatal and misleading band;
And pour upon the thrilled and wakening sense,
The light of faith—of hope—of penitence!—
But Heaven has here impressed its awful mark,
And vain our efforts on a soul so dark.—
Its best, its rarest gifts, that bounteous Heaven
Had to yon blind, deluded Mortal given:—
She spurned, and armed against itself, the love
That on her natal hour had beamed above:—
Its law is trampled—and its faith defiled—
Its wrath is dared—its Ministers reviled!—
And like that diabolic Queen of yore,
She bathes—she triumphs in her country’s gore; 400

Leagued with its foes, she loosed the blood-hound's chain,
And turned him to his cursed work again;
Like her, she strives our firmer trust to draw
From Israel's God, to some strange Idol's law,—
Their end alike—the arm they dared despise,
Gathers its might omnipotent—she dies!—
Hardened, impenitent!—Hell opes her gate,
To ease the earth, from such unnatural weight!—
Boasting of crime—'till now unheard, unthought—
O'er its black hue, a specious veil she wrought;
Enchantment on her tongue, its spell had cast,
As with a dying effort—strongest—last—
She would have won our mortal frailty,
And on ourselves, returned her infamy—

« But what avails, at this most precious time,
The award delayed, to shadow forth the crime?—
In every eye, I trace indignant shame—
Her blood—her blood alone—ye justly claim!—
A God offended, from his awful throne,
Deigns on this solemn council, to look down—

And Ministers of vengeance waiting stand,
To pour their vials on this prostrate land—
If yet unpurged from that unholy stain,
Whose fume has darkened the celestial fane—
Like Abel's blood, it cryeth from the dust,
For retribution terrible and just! »—

Ere he had ceased, a low and boding sound,
As distant waters, murmured sullen round :
« Lead—lead her to the block! »—the awful cry,
From lip to lip re-echoed sternly by.—
The Abbess heard—and bowing to the ground,
Each writhing sense, a passing calmness found :—
The grief-struck Carlos slowly left the scene,
That was to end the life of Rosaline :—
The Judge arose—in still and solemn gloom—
And spoke the last—irrevocable doom :—
Unfeared, the fiat of their justice sped,
And reckless lighted on the Culprit's head.—

And was that justice, which condemned?—oh! say
Ye earthly casuists of a fleeting day!—

The mind was pure—yet from that source there flowed,
What, save itself, might all pollute—corrode—
Yet pause—corruption it might spread thus far :—
T'would check the universal sin of war—
Would teach Mankind, what they believe no more,
One, and the self-same God, they all adore.—
Wisdom is finite—and from acts alone,
Can Man judge Man—for those he must atone,
'And justly—but the Power is infinite—
The secret soul lies open to his sight—
There he impressed his law—and in that book,
Not to the judgements of the earth will look.—
That law is perfect and unchangeable,
'Alike in Christian, and in Infidel—
That, which forms general virtue—cannot prove
Vice individual—thus, the law above
Adjudged her sinless—but the law of Man—
As erring 'gainst his frail, imperfect plan—
Pronounced her condemnation—and she dies,
To that offending Judge, a sacrifice.—

Now by the block, the youthful Heroine stood—
No wild, forced phrenzy fired her mantling blood—
Hatred, contempt—no such base passion rose,
To taint the dawning rapture of repose—
But calm and pale—in all the semblance high,
Of grand and unaffected dignity.—
But ere she sought that long and glorious rest,
Its Author thus, in oral prayer address :

« O Thou!—whose name no mortal lip can tell—
God of the Christian and the Infidel!—
O Thou! unknown, unnamed, this mortal hour!
Unspeakable, immeasurable Power!—
I call thee Father—for I feel thee here,
Source of my origin—my love—my fear!—
Thou knowst my heart—thou readst engraven there,
All that I vainly would pour forth in prayer!—
My soul communion seeks—yet springs to thee,
Too warm for words—too eager to be free.—
Thy voice speaks pardon, consolation nigh,
Or whence this scorn of death and infamy?—

This glow of hope—luxuriant release,
That lulls each sense to deep, celestial peace?—
She paused—and wrapt in vision bright and high,
Scarce wore the semblance of mortality :—
When some kind Priest, inflamed with holy zeal
Thus warned her of her soul's eternal weal :
• Princess!—thy prayer is blasphemy—hold! hold!—
Ere thy dark soul, in liquid fire enrolled,
Shrieks in unheard-of pain—which it must bear
While Nature lasts in earth, in sea, and air!—
Tranquil yet firm, the fearless Culprit said :
• The crime—the punishment be on my head!—
The wondering Monk upraised his sunken eyes,
And fled in silence from the sacrifice.—

And now, that awful period is come,
Which bears the erring Mortal to her home!—
Which rudely snaps the stem, that one poor hour
Had gently parted from its fragile flower!
See! how those fiends of blood prepare to aim
The deadly blow, that ends her woes and shame! 500

The Sufferer o'er her breast so meek and fair,
Binds the long tresses of her floating hair—
But as she wreathes their rich luxuriance round,
Why starts she at that slight and passing sound?—
Why from the earth her timid glance upraised,
So strangely eager on the arch-way gazed?—
The crimson blushes mantling on her cheek!—
Is't new-born fear—or some wild hope they speak?—
—Sternly and loud, the haughty Nuncio bade
The pausing Headsmen seize the fear-struck Maid—
T'was vain—as thunder o'er the midnight sky—
As battle-blast, that on the mount-top high,
Shakes the resounding caves with signal dread,
Rousing the trembling Peasant from his bed—
Broke forth at once—a sound—so full of fear—
That oft Iberia had recoiled to hear!—
The name of Alcon—echoed to the dome,
And shook the base of this subterrene tomb!—
—Opposing arms with loud and hideous jar,
Seemed as they threw a last and lingering bar—

Tis past—the portals turn—and crowding pour
The threatened vengeance of the outraged Moor!—
—Between the Headsmen and their Victim stood
That dark gigantic form—imbrued in blood—
Breathless with toil—convulsed with maniac rage—
Which e'en submission vile could scarce assuage—
Low on their knees the fatal axe was laid—
Beneath his foot he crushed their humbled head—
And nought save that long-loved, subducess charm,
His Rosaline's voice—could stay the lifted arm.—
While, flushed with blood, with deadliest rage, that knew
Nor mercy, nor remorse—his wild Moors flew
To wreak it on the heads of those, who dared
To mock their oft-tried power—unheard, unspared—
Slaughter e'en now had, with a guilty stain,
Defiled the bosom of the sacred fane—
But at their Chieftain's word, all ceased—and save
His dreaded voice—t'was silent as the grave:—

• Ye Slaves of mighty Rome!—ye Peers of Spain!—
Behold your Victor—and receive your chain!—

Think ye the Moor could speak—and not perform?—
Think ye he cowered beneath a self-raised storm?—
That thus ye dared upon each reckless head,
To draw the precious blood, this hour had shed?
Oh! had it stained yon block accurst—to heaven,
Such piles of christian souls I would have given,
As that the startled sun should shine in vain,
Darkened by heaps of the unburied slain!—
—Nay—vail that haughty and indignant scorn,
Which yet on many a lordly brow is worn!—
Surprised—subdued—enchained—ye are not here,
Fit objects for my rage—and less my fear.—
Ere the last morning's early light had shone,
I was your Captive—manacled—and thrown
Upon a couch of straw—and hunted as the beast,
That on the blood of Man, delights to feast—
Or as a vile Assassin.—I am free—
And well have paid such gross indignity—
Seville is mine—her Warriors yield the brand,
And sue for mercy from each Moorish hand—

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Your proud and warlike Prince—whose guilty breast,
Crime with her poltroon mark, methinks imprest—
Opposed my entrance here—he fought, and fell—
—In some fair Paradise the tale to tell.—

I say no more—the utmost now ye know—
Ye are a conquered—not a trampled foe. »—

He spoke—the Chiefs and Soldiers circling round,
Exultingly their new-made Captives bound—
Led by their tawny Victors, rude and stern,
To expiate before some funeral urn,
By bondage and disgrace, the Moorish blood,
That crimsoned Guadalquiver's mountain-flood,—
To prowl for plunder some, the tribune fly;—
Yet more to scape the Moor's too rigid eye;—
And soon that hall, in which those Judges sate,
The unrelenting Ministers of fate—
In awful grandeur—fancied wisdom shone,
Where life or death had waited on their frown—
Was darkened, lonely, still—save when the wind,
In lengthened murmurs, round its walls repined— 580

A broken steel—or mantle steeped in gore—
A heedless step that stained the marbled floor—
Were sole—sad proofs—that scenes of mortal hate,
Had chilled it to repose so desolate.—

What burthen stays the power of song?—
What hand has swept the chords along?—
I would have tuned them to a strain
Of harmony and love—tis vain!—
A melancholy, funeral sound,
To every touch sad echoes round—
And dies in mournings long and slow,
As Seraphs wept a Mortals woe!—
Whence are the mists that gradual rise,
Enveloping my closing eyes?
What airy forms around me glide,
And point to vonder green grave side?
Prophetic Phantoms!—say, oh say!
What Child of Earth resigns its clay?
Does heaven or hell the spirit crave?—
—There in no cross on yonder grave.—

They shake their locks—and passing on—
The mist dissolves—and all are gone!—
And in that region lone and dread,
I'm left to gaze upon the dead!—

And hark!—Dost list those moanings soft and low?
Dost mark pale horror on yon turbaned brow?
His robe and conquering sabre thrown aside,
With them, all semblance of the Victor's pride—
Why clasps he madly to his laboring breast,
That still, pale form—in agony carest?—
Around his neck the arm so listless thrown,—
The long, luxuriant tresses wreathing down,
Scarce rising at her bosom's transient swell—
The lip—the eye—oh! what a tale they tell!—
He speaks not—but his arm, his look on high,
Seem as the Powers of Heaven they dare defy—
But not that arm, unmatched in mortal fight,
May here oppose its solitary might!—
The doom is fixed—the award is signed and past—
It is a bitter pang—but tis the last!—

—The Angel of Extermination bends,
And to her heart the icy bolt descends'—
And slowly closed the heavy fringe, that shaded
Her eyes pure-beaming lustre—cold and faded—
And slowly sank from his, each nerveless arm—
And sealed in death—slept each unsullied char.m.—

Tis said, that on that fatal night,
When Cynthia pale disclosed her light—
From Seville to the mountains high,
That mark her northern boundary—|
O'er hill and dale, through stream and brake,
Across the moor, and silver lake,
Startling the Hermit from his prayer,
And Passenger with step of care,
Slow wandering to the hamlet near,
Where he may find repose and cheer—
A turbaned Foe was seen to speed,
Close muffled on a fiery steed,
That in a cloud of blood and steam,
Flew, like the lightning's rapid beam;

Gigantic was the form it bore,
The hand and cloak were stained with gore;—
A precious weight he seemed to clasp,
Priest close within his iron grasp.—
Some say they caught a transient sight
Of female robe, and arm so white,
That it must be a Maiden fair,
He carried with such savage care.—
They darted up a mountain hoar—
Nor mortal eye beheld them more —

And who is this, that thus ye mark ?—
Why trace that Hero stern and dark ?—
Whose brow is stamped with fiercest gloom,
And dire resolve, and self-wrought doom ?—
I see his foaming courser fly,
And bear him to the mount-top high —
—Tis silence all—the moon's faint ray
Light glitters on the whirling spire,
And silvers o'er the rugged rock,
That rude, majestically broke,

Crowning the verge, which reared its head,
A barren height, lone, lofty, dread.—
He climbed the utmost peak—and there,
Slowly unfolds his burthen fair—
Gazes with sullen, desperate mien,
On the calm brow of Rosaline,—
Lovely in death—a lingering smile
Might e'en the watchful eye beguile,
Bid it an instant cease to weep—
—She seemed so tranquilly asleep.—
He bends to press the lip's rich red,
But scarcely touched shrinks back in dread,
It was so coldly chill—a groan,
The first and last, with wildest tone,
Startled the lonely mountain-cave,
Where Pain had sought repose, and Love had found a grave.—

A darkening cloud has veiled the moon's pale glow,
And wrapt in deepest shade the scene below.—
—And now—'tis past—ah me! a deed was done,
E'en then—that mortal eye must weep and shun!— 680

— « The grave can join us yet! »—the Warrior said—
On Rosaline's bosom, lies his weary head—
The blood flows fast from out the yawning wound,
Purples the stream, and trickles o'er the ground.—
—The wind howls hoarse above their lofty bed—
The only dirge, that paused above the dead.—

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Ages have rolled away—yet still the stone,
Where that stern Spirit breathed its latest groan,
The Peasants mark and shun—and on that hill,
Where once the wild flower, and the wandering rill,
Enamoured bloomed and wept—is now a heath,
Unchanged by winter's snow, or summer's breath,
Bare as its craggy crest :—and legends tell
Of some strange Monk, that in a rocky cell,
Dwelt long and lone—and gave with piteous care,
An unblest tomb to that ill-fated Pair.—
None know the time, when Anselm sought their side—
Dreaded he lived, and unmolested died.—
And more those scrolls relate—that on one night
Of every passing year, an awful sight

Is seen by such, as with adventurous tread,
Dare steal upon the orgies of the Dead :—
For in that cell, with dire-uneearthly laugh,
And yelling shriek, Sprites meet to dance and quaff—
The moon gleams red—and o'er the mountain-brow,
Gliding to solemn strains, wild, soft, and slow,
Wreathed in a chill embrace—is seen the shade
Of a dark Warrior, and a bright fair Maid.—

THE END.

